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Promoting Mental Health and Well-Being: Teachers' Strategies in English Classroom at Secondary Schools

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Čestné prohlášení

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Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci na téma “Promoting Mental Health and Well-Being: Teachers’ Strategies in English Classroom at Secondary Schools” vypracovala samostatně pod dohledem vedoucího diplomové práce a uvedla jsem všechnu použitou literaturu.

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Abstract

This diploma thesis deals with the teachers' strategies of promoting mental health and well-being in English classes at secondary schools. The aim of this thesis was to explore the different strategies used by secondary school English teachers to promote the mental health and well-being of their pupils. For this purpose, questionnaires were developed and sent to English language teachers throughout the Czech Republic. For further research, observations of English lessons were conducted. Various strategies were identified, but also the obstacles that teachers encounter in promoting the mental health among their pupils.

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List of Abbreviations

ADHD	Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder
APA	American Psychological Association
EFL	English as foreign language
ELT	English language teaching
HBSC	The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children
IRTIS	Interdisciplinary Research on the Internet and Society
MBSR	Mindfulness-based stress reduction
MŠMT	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of Czech Republic
MUNI	Masaryk University
NCBI	National Center for Biotechnology Information
NIHR	National Institute for Health and Care Research
NIMH	National Institute of Mental Health
NUDZ	National Institute of Mental Health of the Czech Republic
RVP ZV	The Framework Educational Programme of the Czech Republic
WHO	The World Health Organization
ZPMVCR	Health Insurance Company of the Ministry of the Interior

Introduction

The terms mental health and well-being are widely discussed nowadays, even in the context of the school environment. Recent studies have shown a deterioration in the mental health of children and adolescents in the Czech Republic, with anxiety and depression being the most common illnesses, so I dare say that appropriate prevention and support is essential, not only from the children's families but also from the school. Schools seem to be an ideal setting for enhancing mental health, but also for spotting mental health difficulties in pupils, as children and young people spend most of their time at school place. It is therefore important that teachers are not only sensitive to their pupils but also choose appropriate teaching methods and strategies to do so.

This diploma thesis focuses on strategies of promoting mental health and well-being in English classes, which are used by secondary school teachers in the Czech Republic. Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to find out what methods, if any, teachers use in EFL classes to foster pupils' mental health and well-being. In the theoretical part of this thesis, firstly, there is a focus on defining the main terms, which are: mental health, mental disorders, determinants of mental health and well-being. As for the determinants, the most important ones – genetic and environmental – are mentioned in the thesis. The influence of the Internet is mentioned as well, because recent research shows that children are spending more time there nowadays (MUNI, 2023). The negative impacts of social media are also mentioned, as it has been found that Instagram, for example, can have a negative impact on the mental health of children and adolescents, as it can affect body perception or increase cyberbullying (Warren, 2024).

Methods for enhancing mental health, such as physical activity or eating habits, which are beneficial for overall health, are described in more detail as well (Mental health foundation, 2022). Furthermore, mindfulness or relaxation techniques are mentioned, because it has been shown that these practices can reduce symptoms of anxiety or depression among children and young people (Creswell, 2016). At the end of the thesis, the topics of prevention of mental health disorders and mental health problems in Czech schools are discussed, as well as how these topics are implemented in the curriculum system of the Czech Republic.

As mentioned above, the main aim of this diploma thesis is to explore the various strategies and activities employed by English language teachers in secondary schools in the Czech Republic

to promote mental health and well-being among their pupils. To achieve the objective, the practical part defines research questions and research methods. The research questions are:

1. What strategies do secondary school English teachers currently employ to promote mental health and well-being of their pupils?
2. How do secondary school English teachers perceive the effectiveness of these strategies?
3. What obstacles do teachers experience in implementing mental health promotion strategies in English language teaching?
4. How frequently do secondary school teachers use strategies promoting mental health and well-being in their classroom?

The answers to these questions are based on two research method, one of them is qualitative and second of them is quantitative. For the qualitative method, a questionnaire was chosen. The questionnaire was distributed to English language teachers in secondary schools across the whole Czech Republic. The second method – qualitative method - is an observation, which was carried out by the author of this diploma thesis during their educational practices in master's studies. The practical part of this thesis further compares the answers from questionnaires, the results of observations and the grasp of these topics in the curriculum, since the theoretical part defines the implementation of mental health topics in the Czech curriculum system. I dare to say that this area is still not fully researched at present, as mental health promotion is still not given much emphasis in school setting and their curricula.

This topic was chosen based on my personal interest in promoting mental health and wellbeing, as my second study programme is Education for Health. Furthermore, as mentioned above, many young people nowadays suffer from mental health disorders which should be taken into more serious consideration, even in the school setting. Pupils often face stress and pressure, sometimes linked to grades or high demands from teachers, and I would therefore argue that issues related to mental health promotion or prevention should be considered across the whole school curriculum, including in English classes.

Theoretical part

1. Mental health and well-being

This chapter consists of four subchapters. In the first subchapter the concept of mental health is explained according to different definitions. Further, the concept of mental disorder is being introduced in general and then there are presented the disorders that most commonly affect secondary school students. Next subchapter explains the genetic, environmental and social media factors that have a major influence on the development of mental disorders in children and adolescents. Lastly, there is a subchapter that brings out the concept of well-being, its dimensions and a concept that is called digital well-being.

1.1. Mental health

Mental health refers to a mental state that enables people to manage their daily needs, such as work, learning or coping with stressful situations. In general, mental health is of fundamental value and is deeply connected to human well-being. Further, it can be claimed that mental health let an individual to contribute to their own community (WHO, 2024). According to APA Dictionary of Psychology (2018), mental health is defined as condition of "emotional well-being, good behavioural adjustment, relative freedom from anxiety and disabling symptoms, and a capacity to establish constructive relationships and cope with the ordinary demands and stresses of life." Many definitions and perception of mental health exist, but overall, it may be understood as a state when one feels emotionally and psychologically well and is able to cope with everyday circumstances.

However, everyone experiences changes in mental health throughout life, thus it is important for an individual to maintain it well, especially before and during adolescence, where more than half of adult mental health issues are starting. In recent years, the mental health and well-being of adolescents has increasingly deteriorated, especially among girls (HBSC, 2023). According to the survey of HBSC (Ibid) from the years 2021/2022, adolescent girls are less satisfied from life, struggle with worse mental well-being and feelings of loneliness than boys. This research may suggest that secondary school students are one of the most vulnerable individuals as they are in pre-pubescent and pubescent stages of life. Prevention and intervention are therefore important to mitigate the impact of mental disorders. However, once a mental disorder is

present, with the right treatment and support, people can lead a fulfilling life (Colizzi, Lasalvia and Ruggeri, 2020).

To summarise, recently the mental state of young people and children has been deteriorating, most notably in secondary school pupils. Therefore, it is important to highlight the topic of mental health and its promotion.

1.2. Mental disorders

A mental disorder is defined as a clinically significant disturbance in a person's thinking, control of emotions or behaviour. It is often connected with distress or difficulty in key areas of daily functioning, such as working, socializing or family activities (APA, 2015). In the context of education, mental health disorders such as anxiety, depression or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) can have a major influence on students' academic performance, classroom behaviour and social interactions. It may often result in reduced concentration or lower engagement in learning activities (Patel et al., 2015).

According to the WHO (2022), in 2019 there were approximately 970 million people in the world who suffer from a mental disorder. The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 had a large impact on increasing this figure, with, for example, the occurrence of anxiety rising by 26% and the occurrence of depression by 28%. Although effective prevention and treatment options are available, many people with mental disorders do not have access to adequate care. In addition, many face stigma, discrimination and human rights violations, which may result in the limited access to mental health services (Ibid). It may be concluded that although this is a world where there are plenty of tools to promote mental health, there are still many people suffering from those mental health illnesses.

There are several types of mental disorders, which are also commonly referred to as mental health conditions. WHO (2022) describes several of them, including anxiety disorders, depression, bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, eating disorders, disruptive behaviour and dissocial disorders or neurodevelopmental disorders.

As this diploma thesis is focused on the mental health of secondary school students, further, there are discussed the disorders which are faced by those students the most. Children in secondary school are in the adolescence phase, a period of great physical and psychological change that can be challenging for the adolescent and may be a trigger for mental health difficulties (Říčan, 1989). Overall, it is reported that almost 20% of children and adolescents

suffer from mental health problems. According to German research, up to 50% of all mental illnesses first appear before the age of 14 and 80% by the age of 17 at the latest (BPtK-Standpunkt, 2013).

According to The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG, 2024), the most common mental health disorders during adolescence are anxiety and then mood, attention, and behaviour disorders. Green et. al (2013) also mention conduct and hyperkinetic disorders as mostly common mental health disorders faced by children during adolescence.

In terms of mental health in the Czech Republic, the most common mental disorders among secondary school students are claimed to be anxiety, stress, mood disorders, attention disorders and suicidal behaviour (NUDZ, 2025). Based on a 2023 study by the NUDZ of the Czech Republic (Ibid) of over 6,000 ninth graders from across the Czech Republic, the following findings were made:

- Worsened well-being: more than 50% of students showed signs of deteriorating mental health.
- Symptoms of anxiety: approximately 30% of students showed symptoms of clinically significant anxiety.
- Depressive symptoms: four out of ten pupils (40%) reported signs of moderate to severe depression.
- Gender differences: girls were more likely to have poorer mental health across all domains; more than twice as many girls had both depressive and anxiety symptoms compared to boys. (NUDZ, 2025)

These results suggest that the mental health of adolescents in the Czech Republic is a serious problem that requires attention. I would venture to say that appropriate prevention and support, not only from the family but also from the school, are essential.

1.3. Factors affecting the mental health

There are many different factors and challenges that can affect a child's mental health during their childhood. These may include genetic influences (family history of mental disorders), environmental influences (e.g. trauma or abuse) and pressures from school or family problems (Mental Health Research Centre, 2024). WHO (2022) defines those factors as determinants, that can either protect or worsen one's mental health. Factors that can impair mental health are considered risk factors. These are influences that children are exposed to that increase the risk

of poor mental health. For example, if a child is physically punished by their parents, this may be an element that undermines the child's health. On the other hand, there are also protective factors. Protective factors include various qualities, such as social or emotional skills, that strengthen and increase resilience to mental health problems. Further, those factors may involve "positive social interactions, quality education, decent work, safe neighbourhoods and community cohesion, among others." (Ibid)

However, there are more factors affecting mental health, such as the quality and length of sleep, the amount of exercise, the way one eats or controlling unhealthy habits. Those not only affect one's physical health, but also mental health (ZPMVCR, 2024). Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that not all children exposed to these factors are going to experience mental health problems. They can, however, increase the risk for a child (Mental Health Research Centre, 2024).

The impact of the Internet and the usage of social media on mental health and well-being is also highly debated nowadays, as society live in a digital age, and people are somewhat surrounded by digital technologies daily. The frequent use of social media platforms can affect the mental health of those who use them, so it is important to remember that children in particular can be affected by this use of social media, as recent research shows that they are generally spending more of their free time online (Karim et al., 2020). However, this factor is discussed in more depth later in this diploma thesis, specifically in the subchapter 1.3.3.

Overall, there are many different factors affecting the mental health and well-being of children and young people. These factors can be either protective or risk, thus the most common ones are discussed in more detail below. Further, the most common factors affecting the mental health and well-being of children and young people are described.

1.3.1. Genetic influences

As mentioned above, family history of mental health problems can contribute to a child developing a mental disorder. This is caused either genetically or by the environment in which the child grows up (Mental Health Research Centre, 2024). In addition, these families often experience more difficult circumstances and face a higher probability of child abuse. Genetic and psychosocial factors are interconnected; for example, genetic predispositions can influence how environmental stressors affect a child, meaning that the influence of negative environmental factors is shaped by genetic characteristics (Mattejat and Remschmidt, 2008).

Mattejat and Remschmidt (Ibid) give the example that children whose parents suffer from depression have a much greater risk of developing these disorders than the general population.

The influence of genetic factors on mental health of children was also studied by the NIHR Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre (Taquet et. al, 2021). During their research, they scanned the brains of 700 healthy children. Subsequent analysis of these scans suggests that genetic factors can alter so-called brain wiring during development, increasing vulnerability to various mental disorders. The study also found that these genetic factors have been linked to behaviours such as addictive substances abuse and impulsivity, which can further increase mental health risks (Ibid).

Throughout the child's developmental stages, parents' mental disorders have different effects on their child. In later childhood and adolescence, the child often must accept responsibilities and tasks that should be performed by their parent. Secondly, the child must deal with the parents' problems because their illness often weakens the parental role. This is related to the fact that when parents are struggling with a mental disorder, their ability to support the child in completing a developmental task is not in place (Mattejat and Remschmidt, 2008).

To summarize, the genetic factors can have a great influence on the mental health of children. Children with a family history of mental illness are more likely to develop mental health problems, both because of genetics and their home environment. Those children may be more stressed, take on adult roles early and lack proper support. Genetic factors can also affect brain development, increasing the risk of mental disorders and damaging behaviour.

1.3.2. Environmental influences

Environmental factors may cause a major impact on the development of mental health problems in childhood or adolescence. These environmental influences can include exposure to trauma or abuse. It has been found that traumatic experiences such as abuse, sexual abuse, neglecting or witnessing violence, may result in children developing mental health problems (Mental Health Research Centre, 2024). Deb and Walsh (2012) explain that children and adolescents who experience family violence are more likely to have adjustment problems in the society.

Emotional neglect and abuse are associated with increased aggression and social isolation during middle childhood and with reduced socio-emotional skills during early adolescence. Trauma usually affects a person's mental health over a long period of time and can lead to disorders such as anxiety disorders, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, borderline personality disorder or alcohol and drug abuse. Trauma may also impact one's perception of

oneself or one's relationship with other people (SAMHSA, 2014). The environment can further increase or decrease stress levels of people as well. This alters overall mental health and either serve to protect it or cause mental disorder (Helbich, 2018).

Other environmental factors that affect mental health are place of living or school setting. The home environment encompasses both physical and social factors that include the home environment as well as the surrounding community (Padhy, Sarkar, Panigrahi and Paul, 2015). These factors have a significant impact on mental health, and they include for example climate (e.g. temperature, exposure to natural disasters, climate changes), pollution (air pollution increases the likelihood of depression) or poverty (socioeconomic disadvantages) (Knifton, Inglis, 2020).

The school environment also plays a significant role in shaping the mental health of children and adolescents, as children spend most of their time in an academic environment. However, there are factors that affect mental well-being positively or negatively. Positive school factors that promote mental health include a strong sense of belonging to school environment, connection to school environment, feeling emotionally and physically safe in the school environment, and access to a support system including teachers, social workers, and psychologists. In terms of negative factors, there can included bullying, limited access to education materials, or the lack of teacher training to support learners' mental health (Schulte-Körne, 2016).

For the above-mentioned reasons, it is evident that it is essential to create not only a supportive home environment, but also a supportive and inclusive school environment that will promote children's mental health and well-being.

1.3.3. Social media influences

Further, the social media influence is described, as it may be seen as another equally significant influence on mental health. The Internet or social media platforms have become part of people's everyday lives, and they spend several hours a day using them. Nowadays, people, and especially young people are interested a lot in using social media platforms, as it may be both entertaining and educational. Further, the influence of using those medias on mental health and well-being of children and young people is discussed.

The Internet is often seen as a "double-edged sword" - it can benefit society greatly, but it can also be harmful in certain ways. However, a major problem may arise for children and adolescents, who, according to current research, spend a large part of their free time on the

Internet. The 2021-2022 study (MUNI, 2023) by researchers from Masaryk University in Brno focused on smartphone use among children and adolescents aged 13 to 17. Based on objective data collected from phones using the IRTIS app, they found that the studied group spends most of their time on social media platforms, especially Instagram and TikTok, or using apps that provide access to entertainment content (e.g. YouTube) and playing games.

Furthermore, the research (MUNI, 2023) revealed that during the morning time, specifically between 8 and 12 o'clock, adolescents spent an average of 9 to 11 minutes on their phones in each hour. However, they spent most of the time on social media and entertaining platforms in the evening, between 6 and 11 o'clock. The survey (Ibid) also found that adolescents between the ages of 13 and 17 spend an average of 4 hours and 11 minutes a day on their smartphones, with 74 minutes of that time spent on social media. Further, it was detected that they turned on their phone screen an average of 78 times a day. The researchers of this survey believe that such time spent on the Internet should not automatically be classified as risky. Excessive phone use may be a problem, but it is what children use their mobile devices for that poses the greater risk.

As mentioned above, social media or the Internet in general can have advantages but also disadvantages for people's lives. However, these benefits or drawbacks on one's mental health are still being a matter of debate (Karim et al., 2020). Karim et al. (Ibid) further explain the Displaced Behaviour Theory, which focuses on a connection between social media and mental health. This theory suggests that social media use may be protective in a way against mental illness but may also be detrimental to its development. "According to the theory, people who spend more time in sedentary behaviours such as social media use have less time for face-to-face social interaction, both of which have been proven to be protective against mental disorders." (Ibid) Nonetheless, it has been found that in the long term, social media use can be quite harmful and can be linked to signs and symptoms of mental illness such as depression, anxiety or stress.

Some other studies (Warren, 2024) performed explain that, for example, the social network Instagram has one of the most negative effects on the mental health of children and adolescents, as it can affect body perception or it can also increase bullying, especially cyber bullying. These factors often lead to poor mental health by increasing feelings of anxiety, depression or loneliness.

On the other hand, the researchers from Masaryk University (MUNI, 2023) claim that the usage of smart phones for entertainment and social communication does not have to be necessarily

damaging for mental health, but it can be the other way around, as the consummation of social media content may provide positive feelings, which further leads to subjective perception of improved well-being. Adolescents may be using those social platforms for meaningful conversations with their peers or families, but they can even use it for educational or entertaining purposes, which are suited to hold the consumer's attention for as long as possible. Rather, it is important that parents are interested in what their child is doing on social media and should have a discussion with them about it.

In summary, the use of social media or the Internet in general can be both beneficial and harmful to children and adolescents in many ways. Children are spending more and more time on these social platforms, and it is therefore important to focus more on how they spend this time and what they do on them.

1.4. Well-being

According to Dodge et. al (2012), well-being is multidimensional concept that includes physical, emotional, mental and social health. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2001) refers to well-being as a state that enables an individual to operate effectively and productively, as well as to deal with everyday situations and stress. WHO (Ibid) further explains that well-being is not simply a state of absence of illness, it rather refers to the presence of positive physical and mental health that enables an individual to be prosperous. Well-being is "a holistic integration of physical, mental, and spiritual well-being, fuelling the body, engaging the mind, and nurturing the spirit." (NCBI, 2017)

As mentioned above, well-being is not only related to the absence of illness but is to do with multiple dimensions of health. The NCBI (Ibid) distinguishes several dimensions of well-being:

- Physical dimension – it focuses on the health, fitness and functionality of the body. It includes regular exercise, proper nutrition, sleep and addressing health issues to maintain overall physical vitality.
- Intellectual dimension - it is related to cognitive ability, critical thinking, creativity and a constant learning process. It involves the acquisition of knowledge, problem solving and engaging in mentally stimulating activities.
- Emotional dimension – this refers to the ability to understand, express and manage emotions effectively. It includes resilience, coping mechanisms, self-awareness and maintaining emotional balance.

- Social dimension - it involves creating and maintaining healthy relationships with others. It includes communication skills, empathy, support networks and a sense of belonging.
- Spiritual dimension – it reflects sense of purpose, meaning and connection to something greater than oneself. This can be religious beliefs, personal values, mindfulness, or philosophical perspectives.
- Vocational dimension - it relates to career satisfaction, skills development and alignment between work and personal values. It emphasizes fulfilling and meaningful work that contributes to the achievement of personal and social goals.
- Financial dimension - this focuses on financial stability and includes budgeting, saving and achieving financial independence.
- Environmental dimension – it is related to the environment and its effect on well-being. It includes living in a safe, healthy and supportive environment and practicing sustainability to protect natural resources (NCBI, 2017).

These dimensions are interdependent, which means that if one of these dimensions is not sufficiently satisfied, the others are affected by it. Every person prefers to satisfy a different one according to their personal preferences and goals, nevertheless it is crucial to maintain a balance between all of them (Ibid). However, it works the other way around as well. When an individual is satisfying each dimension, it is beneficial in a way that it helps to maintain overall well-being (Whitman College, 2025).

In recent years, a new concept has emerged in the field of well-being. This term is called "digital well-being", and it refers to an influence of digital technologies on individuals' well-being. According to the Digital Capability Framework, digital well-being is a concept that is "used to describe the impact of technologies and digital services on people's mental, physical, social and emotional health. It is a complex concept that can be viewed from a variety of perspectives and across different contexts and situations." (Digital Capability Framework, 2025)

Furthermore, as mentioned above, this concept may be distinguished into two categories or perspectives. First one is "an individual view", which concerns the positive and negative effect of digital technologies on an individual's mental health and overall well-being. The second category is "a social view", and this addresses the content creators and the ones who oversee digital technologies, as they influence the digital content which may be beneficial or disruptive to one's well-being (Škola Populo, 2023). In other words, social media or digital technologies

may have certain advantages or disadvantages to one's well-being. However, it is important to think about this rationally and know how to use these technologies in the right way to benefit overall well-being.

In a summary, the concept of well-being is complex and can be seen as a concept of many different dimensions that should be equally satisfied in order to maintain good well-being. However, nowadays, with an increase of social media use, the positive and negative sights of those media are widely discussed together with the influence on the overall well-being or mental health of people.

2. Enhancing mental health and well-being

In this chapter, various methods and practices that can enhance children's or in general people's mental health are explained and discussed. The first subchapter introduces the different methods that are generally used to promote mental health and well-being. The second subchapter deals in more detail with the promotion of mental health and well-being in schools, as it discusses specific activities that can be used by teachers in order to enhance mental health of their students in ELT. Finally, emphasis is placed on the implementation of mental health support in the Czech education system and on prevention in the Czech education system, which is an integral part of mental health care and support.

2.1. Methods of promoting mental health and well-being

As described by the WHO (2022), mental health promotion is accomplished by focusing on the determinants of an individual's mental health and then working to mitigate risk factors, strengthen resilience, and create a supportive environment. Fostering mental health is just as important as fostering physical health. This support involves people adopting healthy habits for life, maintaining a healthy way of living and creating a healthy and supportive environment around them to help them maintain their mental health and well-being (Herrman and Jané-Llopis, 2012).

Generally speaking, people encounter mental health support in their everyday environment - where they live, work, learn and prosper. This mental health support is very important and contributes to overall well-being. The WHO (2025) distinguishes several methods to promote mental health, specifically mental health programmes in school and workplaces, early childhood intervention and prevention, social or community support, empowering women in society and anti-discrimination programmes. However, the successful application of these methods requires the involvement of different sectors working together. These are both health and non-health sectors, e.g. education, employment, social care, justice, environment, etc.

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH, 2024) argues that taking care of mental health and well-being should be a daily practice because it may contribute to handling pressure, lowering the risk of illness, or raising energy. The NIMH (Ibid) recommends further approaches for taking care of mental health:

- Regular physical activity: It is recommended to have at least 30 minutes long exercise every day, as it can be beneficial for one's mood or health in general.

- Regular and healthy nutrition and hydration: Regular and healthy eating and hydration is important to maintain energy and focus throughout the day. Related to this is the intake of caffeine and alcohol, which can affect a person's overall condition, so it is important to be careful with these two substances.
- Sleeping schedule: It is crucial for overall health and well-being that a person gets regular, quality sleep. The quality of sleep is also affected by the so-called blue light that people receive from mobile devices, so it is important not to exposed to these devices for some time before going to bed.
- Relaxing activities: These can include basically any activities that involve, for example, meditation, muscle relaxation, breathing exercises, or basically any hobbies or interests that people enjoy and do not cause them a great deal of stress.
- Goals and priorities: Prioritising is essential to maintaining wellbeing and mental health. When one is able to function in a way that is not overwhelming, it is beneficial.
- Feelings of gratitude: What can help to promote mental health and well-being is learning to be grateful every day for what one is surrounded by. It is recommended to write these things down every day or at least say them to oneself in one's own head.
- Positive thinking: It is essential to concentrate on positive things and not give space to negative thoughts that are not valuable.
- Social connection: The company of family or friends is a form of support as well, as they may offer help in demanding situations (NIMH, 2024).

Further, the most common methods and approaches to support people's mental health and well-being are explained and discussed

2.1.1. Physical activity

Physical activity or exercising is beneficial not only for physical health, but also for mental health, as the physical movement delivers hormones into the brain that make the individual experience pleasurable or positive feelings. A person should choose an activity that they enjoy and through which they can have a life goal to work towards. Physical activity can increase energy, relieve feelings of stress, tension, frustration, or make one more concentrated and motivated (Mental health foundation, 2021).

The WHO (2024) highlights lack of physical activity as a risk factor for the development of various diseases. In the adult population, regular exercise protects against and prevents, for example, cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and helps alleviate symptoms of depression

or anxiety. For children and adolescents, regular physical activity is beneficial in that it not only promotes good physique but also has a positive effect on cognitive function and mental health. On the contrary, for children or adults who tend to live a more passive lifestyle, this can lead to a deterioration in physical fitness or a reduction in sleep time, which may have an impact on mental health and well-being as well.

The WHO Global guidelines on physical activity and sedentary behaviour (2020) explain that physical activity is important, and any amount of it is better than being passive. Looking in more detail at the recommendations for children and adolescents aged 5 to 17, they should, on average, engage in at least 60 minutes of moderate to intense, predominantly aerobic physical activity per day.

As mentioned above, any physical activity is beneficial for the human body. However, children and adolescents should begin with a less demanding activity and then gradually increase the intensity and frequency of the exercise and activities. Further, it highlights that physical activity may decrease the risk of depression and depressive states in children and adolescents with and without major depression. In terms of symptom relief, physical activity may be comparable to therapy (WHO, 2020).

Other studies among the years have been done and they have proven how physical activity and mental health are closely connected. For example, Biddle et al. (2019) conducted their analysis and concluded that there is compelling evidence that physical activity has positive impacts on young people's mental health, including improvements in emotional well-being, self-esteem or academic achievement.

2.1.2. Mindfulness and relaxation techniques

The term mindfulness is well known for many years. Jon Kabat-Zinn (Creswell, 2016) explains mindfulness as a state where the individual deliberately focuses on the present moment without judging anything. APA Dictionary of Psychology (2025) describes this concept more detailed as a state, when one is being aware of their own inner state and environment. As a result, people are able to observe their thoughts, emotions and other feelings without any response. According to other authors (Matko & Sedlmeier, 2019) mindfulness is understood as a kind of meditation with a concentration on what is happening around right now.

As mentioned above, the concept of mindfulness has long been known. In 1979, Jon Kabat-Zinn was using methods and techniques of mindfulness during his created program, which was called Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR). The used methods included body scan,

mindful breathing and mindful movement. The aim of these practices was to improve awareness of thoughts, emotions and physical sensations and to encourage a more sympathetic and non-judgmental approach to oneself. This development of self-awareness is important to help people better manage stress and minimise its harmful effects on their health. Research has shown that MBSR successfully reduces symptoms of anxiety, depression, and chronic pain while promoting overall well-being, which is the reason why this program is widely used in clinical facilities (e.g., hospitals, mental health centres, etc.) (Creswell, 2016).

Further, methods of mindfulness are widely used in therapeutic interventions, for example in mindfulness-based cognitive behaviour therapy, mindfulness-based stress reduction or mindfulness meditation (APA, 2025).

One of the most common mindfulness exercises is the aforementioned mindful breathing or breathing meditation, a technique that can have an impact on mental health, for example by decreasing stress, boosting positive feelings or feelings of calm. This technique can be used whenever a person is feeling stressed, as it can help them overcome an unpleasant situation. It is a very useful and simple guide that can benefit overall mental health and well-being in general (Celestine, 2020). This method is done by focusing on physical sensations of breathing, for instance how the chest is moving or how the air flows in and out of the body. However, it can be done differently, for example by counting the breaths or by focusing on the sound of breathing. The aim of this exercise is to bring one's attention from something stressful to their breathing. Mindful breathing or breathing exercises in general can be helpful in reducing anxious feelings (Blanchfield, 2022).

However, this mindful breathing can be considered a meditation or essentially a relaxation technique as it helps to release stress. Speaking of relaxation and relaxation techniques, they can consist of many different activities. It can be claimed that everyone is relaxing in their own way, for example when one is going on a walk, listening to songs or drinking tea. When done correctly, relaxation can have a significant impact on physical and mental health by helping to alleviate stress, increasing resistance to illness or helping to increase energy (Smith, 2005). In addition, relaxation techniques also bring other benefits to person's physical and mental health, such as slowing of the heart rate, lowering of blood pressure, relieving of anger and frustration, decreasing of fatigue or boosting of concentration and mood (Mayo Clinic, 2024).

There are different types and techniques of relaxation. Generally, it is about focusing on something soothing and something that helps one to become more aware of the body. Further, there are possible relaxation exercises:

- Autogenic relaxation: The word autogenic means something that originates from within oneself, as this activity engages both visual imagination and body self-awareness in order to alleviate stress levels. There are many ways to perform this exercise, for instance one can focus on specific word, which they keep saying to themselves in their own mind. Through this way, relaxation occurs and muscle tension in the body is released.
- Progressive muscle relaxation: In this exercise, one focuses on switching between relaxing and tensing different muscles, thus learning the difference between muscle relaxation and tension and becoming more aware, which can also help in stressful situations to relieve pressure.
- Visualization: This relaxation technique is based on using as many senses as possible. One can create thoughts and images in one's mind that are personally calming and help one feel at peace (Mayo Clinic, 2024).

Nevertheless, there are many other ways of relaxation, such as deep breathing exercises, massages, yoga, musical therapy, art therapy or aromatherapy. It is essential to choose a relaxation technique that is comfortable and close to us, and it is important to practice it as a skill. This can then prevent stress from getting out of control and reducing quality of life (Ibid).

From the above information, the impact of mindfulness activities and relaxation techniques on mental health is evident. It is proven that these activities are beneficial to people's overall health and well-being and therefore I dare say that everyone should apply these methods in their lives.

2.1.3. Balanced diet and hydration

Proper and balanced diet and hydration contribute to mental health and well-being, as has been shown in various studies. For example, diet can affect a person's mood and emotions, but the link between diet and mental health is more complex and nuanced (Mental Health Foundation, 2022). This is related to blood sugar levels, because once they decrease, the body does not have enough energy, which leads to fatigue and feelings of irritability. Once the blood sugar levels are unstable, it may lead to experiencing mood disorders, including anxiety or depression (BBC, 2025).

Mental Health Foundation (2022) mentions further tips for enhancing mental health through proper diet and hydration:

- Regular eating: It is important to maintain a regular diet as it is preventing from decreasing blood sugar level.
- Adequate hydration: Staying hydrated affects not only one's mood, but also ability to focus.
- Balanced and nutritious diet: Mental health and well-being is being affected by the nutrients that one receives into their body in their daily diet. Firstly, it is important to intake healthy fats that support the body's function and to limit the intake of trans fats, which in turn are not good for the heart's function. Secondly, getting enough protein is also essential, as it contains substances that significantly affect our brain and mood. Finally, people should remember to consume adequate amounts of vegetables, fruits and whole grains since they support the body's immune system and are also beneficial for the brain.
- Caffeine intake: The intake of caffeine is something that may greatly affect a person's mood precisely because it often causes problems with sleep, which in turn can have impact on a person's mood, mental health or overall well-being (Mental Health Foundation, 2022).

The theme diet and mental health is closely related to eating disorders because eating disorders are being classified as mental disorders. Among the most frequent eating disorders are anorexia, bulimia and binge-eating (Keel, 2017). The most common symptoms of these disorders are related to food intake and perceptions of one's own body and appearance, as those with these conditions often see themselves as imperfect and feel the urge to change. These disorders are very common among adolescents, where there is a high risk of developing them. A major risk factor is the "social ideal of beauty", which is presented mostly on the Internet, where children nowadays spend their free time. There is often a comparison of oneself with someone who presents themselves as "perfect" on the Internet, which can lead to eating disorder problems (NZIP, 2021).

A balanced diet and hydration are very important for supporting mental health and well-being. Everyone should therefore focus on eating properly, according to given recommendations. For children and young people, the topic of diet is particularly important as there is a high risk of developing eating disorders during adolescence.

2.1.4. Social environment

The social, economic or any physical environment are important factors affecting mental health and well-being. There are number of factors that are considered risk factors for the development of mental disorders. These factors may be linked specifically to the individual's unsatisfactory social environment (Allen et. al, 2014). The environment is one of the very important factors in maintaining good mental health and well-being, and it is essential to establish the right conditions for life not only during its course but before it begins (WHO, 2024).

The report of The World Health Organization (WHO, 2014) listed several social determinants that influence mental health and well-being. First of them are social connections, as relationships have impact on whether one is feeling lonely or isolated. Those feelings may further lead to a deterioration in mental health, among all age groups. Thus, the strong social connections, relationships and so on are important in enhancing mental health.

Secondly, socioeconomic status of a person is another crucial determinant, as lower socioeconomic position in a society is usually linked to depression or other mental disorders. Social isolation, discrimination and stigma are associated with this. These factors also affect a person's mental health and are often the reason why these individuals are afraid to seek professional help when necessary (Allen et. al, 2014).

Finally, the school environment plays an important role in promoting the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents, where they develop, for example, emotional resilience. The education systems in the world usually offer a range of prevention programmes that can be crucial to young people's mental health (WHO, 2014). In addition, schools have an important role in supporting the development of social, emotional, academic and cognitive skills. Nurturing these skills can affect children's short-term and long-term mental health (Ibid).

In summary, the social environment plays an important role in people's lives, but it also affects the mental health and well-being of individuals. There are many social factors, and they determine just how a person feels emotionally and mentally. Thus, it may affect how one in coping with everyday life.

2.2. Methods of promoting mental health and well-being in ELT

As has been implied throughout this diploma thesis, promoting mental health and wellbeing should be an important part of everyday life. There are different methods and ways to do so, and everyone can choose what is most suitable for them. However, this promotion of mental

health and well-being should also be a part of an education, as it can be beneficial for better school performance in general (Department for Education UK, 2025) or it may also affect, for instance, cognitive functioning or learning ability of children (Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, 2023).

According to the UK Department for Education (Department for Education UK, 2025), school settings should create a safe, peaceful and accepting environment to enhance pupils' well-being and mental health. Schools play many significant roles in promoting mental health of their pupils. Firstly, there is a role of prevention. Schools should protect pupils from developing mental health problems by creating an environment that is safe and helps pupils cope with common levels of stress. This can be achieved, for example, by introducing and promoting themes of mental health and well-being into the school curriculum and therefore into school lessons.

The second role of the school can be seen in identifying mental health problems in pupils, which goes hand in hand with the other role of appropriate and early help. Once the teacher is able to identify that something may be wrong with the pupil, they should take the appropriate steps to help the pupil in the situation and, if necessary, address the problem with professionals. Lastly, it is necessary for the school to cooperate with external professionals and provide them with important information (Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, 2023).

According to National Association of School Psychologists (2020), school setting is also a place, which should support creating positive and health relationships between pupils. Further, schools may play a crucial role in helping to connect students and their families with behavioural and mental health services, which is particularly relevant for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. It seems that school play several very important roles in promoting mental health of pupils and it should use appropriate practices and methods to do so.

Further, methods that can be used to promote mental health and well-being in ELT are described in more detail. The focus is specifically on those activities that have been mentioned in questionnaire in practical part of this diploma thesis. Specifically, I chose these ways of promotion: implementing themes of health into lessons, stress management techniques (e.g. breathing exercise), mindfulness activities (e.g. visualization, guided meditation) and creative writing for self-expression. These methods of promotion were chosen on a personal believe that they can be implemented in English language teaching and can be related to this subject in some

way. By employing these methods, students may relax, relieve stress, feel at ease and at the same time acquire new skills or knowledge.

2.2.1. Health topics in ELT

The first chosen method is incorporation health topics into English lessons. The integration of these topics shows that teachers are not only interested in language acquisition of their pupils, but also in their well-being and mental health. By talking about health-related topics, students not only expand their vocabulary or improve their language skills, but they also learn new health knowledge that they can use in their personal lives. Calderón and Slavin (2018) explain that language teaching is more efficient when there is a connection to a real-world context, so it is effective to implement real-life situations into the lessons. As mentioned above, the introduction of mental health topics or health in general is also beneficial in the sense that students will gain additional or new health information, and it may have a good influence on their lifestyle, as they can acquire healthy habits (EFL Cafe, 2024).

Further, students can improve various skills through these health topics. For example, they can learn some useful expressions that will help them to increase their vocabulary and improve their comprehension. In addition, these topics are usually linked to something that pupils can use in their lives, for example activities that focus on talking about food or grocery shopping (Richards, 2015). It is evident that there are different strategies to implement these themes in English language teaching. For instance, teachers can introduce them through vocabulary acquisition, reading or listening materials, or speaking activities. In this case, teachers have the option of using authentic materials, which are considered effective because they convey real-life situations to students (Goh and Vandergrift, 2012).

Another possible activity is role-playing. For example, pupils can simulate a doctor's visit, with one of them being the patient and the other one the doctor, thus practising not only communication skills but also health-related vocabulary. This is also an activity connected to a real-world situation, which can be beneficial for pupils as it is something they can apply practically in their lives (Harmer, 2007). Nevertheless, themes of health, mental health or well-being may be too sensitive for any individual, so it is important that teachers take this into account and approach these topics respectfully (Mercer, 2011).

Incorporating health topics into English classes supports language development and student well-being. Students will expand their vocabulary and communication skills while gaining practical knowledge about health that they can apply in everyday life. The use of real-world

contexts, such as role plays or authentic materials, makes learning more engaging and relevant for pupils. Overall, there are many ways for teachers to incorporate health topics into the English classroom and it is a great opportunity not only to practice language skills but also to present some knowledge related to health and well-being.

2.2.2. Stress management techniques in ELT

Other methods to describe are stress management techniques. As mentioned earlier, stress management techniques may be considered as relaxation techniques, which help an individual to overcome their stress. Wide ranges of techniques exist, and it is upon everyone whatever they choose to help them work with stressful factors.

Stress can be described as physical and psychological factors that appear during specific demanding situations. These situations are called stressors and trigger those feelings of stress. The situations that can trigger stress are individual to each person, but usually stress can come from work, school or interpersonal relationships (EUC, 2023). Higher levels of stress may lead to frustration, which can later cause more serious health problems such as anxiety. However, if one feels physically and mentally healthy, it may help them to work with stress and stressors effectively, thus physical activity enhance coping with stress. On the other hand, it seems to be important to have another coping strategies that may help when one is feeling stressed of overwhelmed. Schools may play a significant role in building coping strategies of their pupils, as they should focus on promoting children's physical and mental health. These strategies should be developed from an early age, as lifestyle habits are formed during the school years (Blahutková and Charvát, 2009). For the reasons mentioned above, it should be important for pupils to learn in schools how to cope and work with stress effectively.

Firstly, teachers may choose breathing exercises in their English lessons. Those may be used at any stage of the lesson, as it can be useful for different reasons. When used at the beginning, it may be a warm-up activity to calm pupils down and prepare them for a lesson. Breathing exercise can be used as well at the end of a lesson as a closing activity or in fact any time during the lesson to help pupils concentrate or feel calm and safe in a classroom. Breathing exercises can be useful if used correctly. As already mentioned, they can make pupils feel calmer or more focused and they can increase motivation levels of pupils as well. Another advantage of these exercises is the practice of language skills. Pupils can learn new vocabulary and practise listening or speaking as they learn to listen to instructions and be guided by the teacher during

the activity (Gönen, 2022). Breathing exercises not only provide language input but also help create a positive and calm classroom environment and help students overcome stress.

Another possible method is Total Physical Response (further only TPR). TPR is typical for acquiring new language and it is very similar to acquiring a mother tongue. Teacher is a director of activities and is giving commands in model situations, for example: "Listen and draw, listen and show." (Němcová, 2023) Pupils are actively responding with physical movements, which helps them to remember the information better. This method is considered to be very tolerant, as it is recommended to have "parent-like attitude" between teacher and pupils (Richards, and Rodgers, 2014). Mistakes of pupils are often omitted to maintain motivation and to not cause them stress when making a mistake (Němcová, 2023).

Although it is not a method that would typically fall under the category of "stress management techniques", I wanted to include this method here for the very reason that it seeks natural language acquisition, which involves creating a non-stressful environment that benefits well-being of pupils.

As mentioned above, pupils commonly experience stress in the school environment, which can negatively affect their mental health. Therefore, to promote mental health and well-being of pupils, teachers should incorporate techniques in their lessons that create a calm environment in the classroom and help pupils to release pressure.

2.2.3. Mindfulness activities in ELT

The term mindfulness refers to a state where the individual focuses on things that are currently happening around them without any reaction, which was mentioned earlier in this diploma thesis. Mindfulness activities have been proven to have positive influence on both mental and physical health of the individual and there are a wide range of them (Wilmot, 2023). Some of the activities can be applied in the education process, as they can reduce stress and anxiety of pupils may appear, since pupils seem to be stressed more and more these days, which may be challenging to handle for some of them. In addition, these activities can help pupils to stay focused for longer periods of time during lessons or motivate them to learn more (Grade University, 2024).

This subchapter further introduces and describes some possible mindfulness activities that can be used in English language lessons.

First chosen activity is meditation. “Meditation is an exercise which usually involves the individual in turning attention or awareness to dwell upon a single object, sound, concept or experience” (West, 1979). This kind of exercise requires calm and silent environment, which may be hard to maintain in classrooms. However, teachers may modify meditation into entertaining activities that will be enjoyable for pupils. It is recommended to use those activities for example at the beginning of the lesson to make students more concentrated or at the end of the lesson to calm them down. It may also be used as a “classroom management tool to bring the class back together after high-energy activities” (Wilmot, 2023).

In terms of meditation, an activity called “feather breathing” can be practiced. Pupils hold a feather in their hand and first inhale and exhale in such a way that the feather flies out of the palm of their hand. Then, they breathe calmly and quietly, trying not to blow the feather away. In this way, pupils learn how to calm themselves down by focusing on one concept, which is breathing (Ibid). Another possibility is playing guided meditation videos to pupils. However, this can also have its drawbacks, as described by Zedníčková (2023) in the practical part of her diploma thesis. One of the challenges may be, for example, finding a suitable video that is comprehensible for EFL classes in secondary schools. It requires pupils to understand the vocabulary, so the teacher should explain the foreign words beforehand to make it effective. The teacher also needs to monitor the progress of the lesson because some pupils may fall asleep. Zedníčková (Ibid) further states that when trying this activity as part of her research, she discovered that some pupils made fun of it. It is therefore important to keep these facts in mind when carrying out this exercise.

As stated above, meditation is about focusing on one thing at a time, and it helps to calm the individual down. Although it may seem difficult to practice meditation in a school setting, there are various ways to engage pupils and turn it into a calming and soothing activity.

Another possible mindfulness activity is visualization. This activity focuses on the individual’s imagination as the goal is to create a real or unrealistic image or picture in their mind. Visualization has been used a lot in recent years, for instance in the field of sport psychology (Teaching English, 2025). However, it may have positive impact on learning a foreign language as well. For this to be effective, the following key points should be followed:

- Arrange quiet and peaceful environment: The pupils should be as silent as possible to make this activity effective. Some of them may not take it seriously and start laughing,

but the teacher should be the calm one and wait for them to relax. Peaceful setting is necessary for better focusing and relaxing.

- Set the scene and guide pupils through the visualization: In the role of teacher, it is important to be the one who will introduce activity to the pupils and guide them through it. For the beginning, teacher set the scene and help pupils to start visualising. For instance, teacher may say "Imagine that you are sitting at your desk and the sun is shining." The teacher then continues in leading visualization. It is also recommended to engage multiple senses for better imagination, for instance smell or taste.
- Post-activity task: After the activity, students should be given the opportunity to talk to their classmates about their feelings and what they experienced during the activity (Peachey Publications, 2025).

This visualization activity can be part of a teaching method called suggestopedia. This method was developed in the 1970s by Bulgarian psychologist Georgi Lozanov. Suggestopedia is based on the idea that learning is enhanced when a person is surrounded by a relaxing and positive environment, which may include, for example, music, breathing exercises or other relaxing aspects. This method combines both conscious and unconscious processes in language acquisition. The visualisation technique can be used as a pre-task activity where the teacher describes a situation to the pupils and they imagine it with their eyes closed, breathing intently. In this way the pupils' imagination is stimulated, for example, before a writing activity (Richards and Rodgers, 2014).

Further, there is an example of possible visualization exercise for the ELT classroom:

"Lesson review – Ask students to try to visualize what they did in the last lesson. Example: You could ask the students what topics they studied.

Who did they speak with?

What did they see written on the board?

What new words did they learn?

Example: You could try to guide them chronologically from when they entered the classroom.

Who did you sit next to?

What exercise did we do fist? Etc." (Peachey Publications, 2025).

Overall, mindfulness activities are helpful in many ways, for instance, they may reduce stress or help calm oneself down. They undoubtedly have their place in the school environment since they can not only have a soothing effect but can also increase motivation in pupils. By promoting mental health together with well-being, mindfulness can play an important role in helping pupils achieve success both in their studies and in their personal lives.

2.2.4. Creative writing in ELT

According to Hyland (2021), creative writing may be seen as "any writing, fiction or non-fiction that occurs outside of everyday professional, journalistic, academic and technical forms of writing. Most typically we think of novels, short stories and poems in this category, but it can also include screenwriting and playwriting, which are texts to be performed, and creative non-fiction such as personal and journalistic essays." The main purpose of this type of writing is for the individual to express themselves. In this subchapter, further focus is on how this way of expressing oneself and creative writing in general can be used in English language classes as a form of promoting pupils' mental health.

Creative writing can be used not only by writers or authors, but it can also be used in English classes because it brings certain benefits to learners. However, the British Council (2023) states that creative writing in English language classes is more beneficial for intermediate and higher levels, so it is evident that this technique is not applicable to all learners, as it requires a certain level of language skills to express oneself in written form. This kind of writing seems to be enjoyable for pupils as well as it encourages their artistic expression or stimulates their imagination (Tompkins, 1982). Also, one can organize their own thoughts better if they write about what they think or feel, which make them more aware of it. When it comes to mental health, for people with mental issues such as anxiety or ADHD, creative writing can be beneficial because it allows them to focus on only one action at the time. In addition, a person can write down their emotions if they do not feel well, which can help them increase an ability to think clearly and rationally in unpleasant situations (University of Greater Manchester, 2022).

According to recent study from 2023 (Peach, 2023) which focused on the influence of literacy on pupils' mental health and well-being, pupils were able to relax and reflect on their mental health and well-being through activities such as reading, creating writing or writing their own journal. Creative writing is not only a relaxing activity for pupils, but it also may contribute to strengthening of self-esteem. Once pupil is expressing themselves through creative writing

assignment, praise from the teacher can occur, which may lead to an increase of pupil's self-confidence. However, the individual can also reflect on who they are as a person and their importance through this writing, which also enhance positive perception of themselves (University of Greater Manchester, 2022). This goes hand-in-hand with understanding oneself, which can take place in the course of creative writing, and once one knows oneself, it is a great foundation for mental health (Hall, 1954).

In terms of promoting mental health, the benefit of creative writing in English classes is the stress relief that comes from allowing pupils to express their thoughts and feelings in these activities, which is just a release (University of Greater Manchester, 2022). Last but not least, it is also important to mention the stimulating function as it promotes the pupils' thinking, cognitive functions and creativity (British Council, 2023).

Therefore, creative writing is not only a way to foster creativity or language skills in pupils, but also a way for them to relax, release pressure or get to know themselves better. Although the creative writing technique is more challenging and, according to some sources, is intended for more intermediate learners, it is still an effective way for pupils to practice their writing skills, as well as contribute to better well-being and mental health.

2.3. Promotion of mental health in the Czech schools

In the educational programmes of the Czech Republic, the topics of mental health and well-being appear mainly in the subject named Education for Health. This subject deals with themes such as psycho hygiene, relaxation techniques, stress or promotion and prevention of both physical and mental health. Further, Education for Health aims to equip pupils with knowledge and skills related to taking care of their own health and leads them to apply that in their own lives (RVP ZV, 2023, pp. 90-91).

Nevertheless, I dare say that the issue of mental health promotion or prevention of mental health should be considered across the whole curriculum, as pupils today face a great deal of stress and pressure. This diploma thesis focuses on strategies of promoting mental health and well-being in English language classes, so further, there is described what related topics are included in the Framework Educational Programme for English language classes at secondary schools.

The Framework Educational Programme list thematic areas for each subject and for English language, there are some themes related to the issued of health, such as health care, emotions, moods or eating habits (RVP ZV, 2023, p. 29). However, these topics may seem somewhat

general and do not convey any specifics, so it is up to each school or English teacher to decide how to deal with them. It should also be mentioned that these topics in the Framework Educational Programme are only recommended, so when a school creates its own curriculum, it is not obliged to implement these topics (NPI, 2025). Thus, it is evident that not every teacher is dealing with themes of health or mental health in their English lessons.

Further, the Educational Programme lists several cross-cutting themes which reflect issues that are very common in contemporary society and equip pupils with essential attitudes and values that contribute to their personal development (RVP ZV, 2023, p. 125). The form of implementation of cross-cutting themes in teaching is not strictly given, so they are usually realized in other subjects, although some authors recommend teaching them separately or in form of project teaching (Maršák, Pastorová and Topinková, not dated). Two groups of cross-cutting themes are somewhat related to mental health and well-being (RVP ZV, 2023, p. 125). The first one is called personal and social education, in which pupils should acquire knowledge and skills related to psycho hygiene or coping with challenging life situations (Valenta, 2012). The second, environmental education, which is usually implemented in subjects such as biology or chemistry, aims to give pupils a positive attitude towards the environment. However, this cross-cutting theme covers so many topics that it can be linked to other subjects, even the English language (Janoušková, 2005). In terms of mental health and well-being, environmental education includes topics such as maintaining a healthy lifestyle and the relationship between the environment and human health (RVP ZV, 2023, p. 134).

However, in 2020, the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has published a document entitled Strategy of Czech Republic's Education Policy until 2030+. This document identifies the goals and changes that should take place in education by the year 2030. As regards well-being and mental health, the aim here is to focus on the development of "functional social behaviour of pupils." Schools should create an environment conducive to this development, as there is a very little emphasis on psychological hygiene or prevention of depression, anxiety and other mental disorders in schools. Pupils also have very limited knowledge of mental health, which is also seen as a major issue in this area (MŠMT, 2020) and as mentioned earlier in this diploma thesis, many young people nowadays suffer from mental health illnesses, and it seems to be a huge problem. This is why not only parents of children, but also teachers and the whole school environment should support the mental health and well-being of pupils.

As part of the revision of the Framework Curriculum for Primary Education, some changes have been introduced in the area of mental health and well-being promotion. Firstly, there will

be a new cross-cutting theme called “caring for self and others”, which aims to: “...support the application of acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes in self-development and active care for self and others in all dimensions of wellbeing - physical, cognitive, emotional, social and spiritual.” (NPI, 2025) There will also be an emphasis on creating a safe school environment that meets the basic needs of pupils and supports the development of their resilience. Part of the new key competence is going to be also the so-called “own well-being”. This expected learning outcome should focus specifically on the development of learners’ well-being and the ability to seek support when needed (Ibid).

It is evident from the above-mentioned information that the Czech educational system is trying to move towards greater support for pupils’ mental health and well-being and the themes of mental health and well-being are therefore likely to be integrated throughout the entire curriculum. However, it is important that appropriate methods and ways of doing this are chosen in practice.

2.4. Prevention of mental health problems in Czech schools

According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2004), prevention is seen as set of activities and approaches that are aiming at reducing the probability of an individual developing a disease or slowing the development of a disease. Prevention is very important regardless of whether a person feels mentally well or not, and based on this, three types are distinguished - primary, secondary and tertiary. Primary prevention aims to protect individuals from developing any mental health problem before they even start and focuses on promoting good mental health. Secondary type of prevention target individuals who are at higher risk of developing or experiencing any mental health issue, while tertiary prevention is empowering those who suffer from mental health problems, so it focuses on alleviating their symptoms (Mental Health Foundation, 2021).

Czech schools are obligated to support and protect their pupils’ health, as it is stated in the School act, thus any form of prevention is necessary in the school environment. Nevertheless, Czech educational system does not have any complex system, that would be preventing mental health of pupils, it only reacts to pathologic or risky behaviour or manifestation of mental health problem, such as drug usage or bullying. While each school is required to develop its own Minimum Prevention Programme, this is usually focused only on promoting healthy lifestyles or personal and social development (ČSU, 2025).

In the coming years, some changes in the area of mental health promotion and prevention in the Czech Republic's education system should take place, as defined in the National Action Plan for Mental Health 2020-2030. In particular, it emphasises the importance of developing teachers' competences in the field of prevention mental health disorders and promotion of mental health. Another key point is the creation of psychosocial educational content for teachers and future teachers. Finally, psychosocial literacy will also be implemented in Czech education programmes, starting in kindergartens (MZD, 2021). However, according to the Czech Secondary School Union (ČSU, 2025), these upcoming changes are described very briefly and many of what they consider essential points are missing.

As part of primary prevention, there are various programmes that are dedicated to promoting mental health and well-being and, in fact, implementing these topics in the lessons is also a form of prevention. For effective prevention, schools should create a safe environment where pupils feel comfortable, but teacher training in this area is also essential. Teachers need to know how to approach pupils individually and how to support their individual needs, because school is not just about imparting knowledge, but also about caring for pupils (Brandová, 2022).

In summary, it seems that Czech educational system has some weaknesses in the area of mental health prevention, but this situation seems to be changing for the better. Nonetheless, prevention is crucial part of enhancing mental health and well-being of young people and it must be taken seriously.

Practical part

The practical part of this thesis is based on research executed by the author of this thesis. Firstly, main research, research questions, research methods together with research procedures are defined and described. Focus of this thesis is to explore various strategies and activities that are mostly used by English language teachers in Czech secondary schools to promote mental health and well-being among pupils. To explore this, firstly, observation of a few English language classes during teaching practices was conducted. As a next step, questionnaires were distributed among secondary school English language teachers. Based on this, research data were analysed, interpreted and compared.

3. Research Aim and Questions

The following subchapters further define the main research aim, partial aims, together with research questions of this diploma thesis.

3.1. Research Aim

The main aim of this diploma thesis research, as already mentioned, is to explore various strategies and activities employed by English language teachers in secondary schools in the Czech Republic to promote mental health and well-being among their pupils. The partial aims are to find out how often teachers use activities and strategies to promote mental health and well-being, what barriers teachers face in implementing these strategies, and their perceptions of the effectiveness of these strategies. Overall, the main focus of practical part is on teachers, their strategies of promoting mental health among their pupils and their perception of the used strategies.

3.2. Research Questions

Research of this thesis is providing answers to the following research questions:

1. What strategies do secondary school English teachers currently employ to promote mental health and well-being of their pupils?
2. How do secondary school English teachers perceive the effectiveness of these strategies?
3. What obstacles do secondary school teachers experience in implementing mental health promotion strategies in English language teaching?

4. How frequently do secondary school teachers use strategies promoting mental health and well-being in their classroom?

4. Methodology

For the research investigation of this diploma thesis, both quantitative and qualitative methods are chosen. Quantitative method may be described as a method which is based on positivism, and it recognizes the existence of only one reality that is based on an already existing phenomenon. On the other hand, qualitative method is based on the fact that many other realities may exist (Chráska, 2007, p. 32).

A questionnaire was one of the tools chosen for data collection in this research. Chráska (2007, p. 163) describes this method as one of the most used data collection approaches. In order to obtain responses quickly and efficiently, an online questionnaire was used for this research. Online questionnaires have several advantages, such as the fact that they can be done in a short time and at low cost (Narayan and Nayak, 2019).

As far as the procedure of this research is concerned, the questionnaire was created by the author of this thesis using the questionnaire tool available on *survio.com*. The questions were written in English because the respondents were English language teachers, so they should have no problem answering them. However, it is possible that if the questionnaire had been in Czech language, perhaps more teachers would have been willing to complete it. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

The participants of this research were English language teachers at lower-secondary school or junior high schools, so about thirty schools all over the Czech Republic were contacted and asked to distribute the questionnaire to the appropriate teachers. Further, the questionnaire was also shared on social media platforms for wider accessibility. However, many teachers were not willing to complete the questionnaire, thus altogether twenty-four respondents filled it.

At the beginning of the questionnaire there is an introduction in which the respondents are introduced to the aim of the research and to the author of the questionnaire. They are also assured of the anonymity of their responses and are expressed gratitude for completing and contributing to the study. Further, there are fifteen questions of various types. First, they are asked about their age and how many years of teaching experience they have. The questions then focus on the use of specific strategies, the frequency of their use, their effectiveness and possible problems with their implementation, in order to answer research questions, which were stated in subchapter 3.2. All the questions were close-ended, however, for some questions there was the possibility of answering in one's own words if the respondent did not agree with any of the

possible answers given. One of the questions was optional so the respondents were able to skip it, if it did not apply to them.

The observation method was chosen as a second research tool. Observation is an activity in which an observer chooses an individual or group of people and monitors them at a particular location (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper and Allen, 1993). Two types of observation can be distinguished: participant observation and non-participant observation. In participant observation, the researcher is actively involved in the activities of the group being analyzed. (George, 2023). However, non-participant observation was chosen for this study, where the observer is not involved in the activities so as not to affect the participants' behavior (Easy Sociology, 2024). The observation method was chosen because pupils and teachers were observed in their natural environment and the data could have been gathered not only through the questionnaire but also through what actually occurs in the school environment, especially in English language classes.

To obtain appropriate data, observations were made during the author's two teaching practices. The first teaching practice took place in a small village school in the Olomouc region. During this teaching practice, four English lessons were observed, three in the 6th grade and one in the 9th grade. The second teaching practice took place in a larger urban school, also in the Olomouc region. During this teaching practice, three English lessons were observed, two of them in 6th grade and the last one in 8th grade.

Observation sheets were used to collect data, and they are available in appendices. The main objective was to analyze the whole lesson, specifically the lesson management, lesson planning, student engagement, classroom atmosphere, assessment and feedback or lesson content. As this thesis focuses on methods of promoting pupils' mental health and well-being in English language classes, the data in the following chapter is analyzed in terms of fostering mental health and well-being. The focus was therefore on what, if any, methods of mental health support the teacher uses in their English language lessons.

To summarize the methodological approach of this diploma thesis, two different research methods were employed – a questionnaire and a classroom observation. The methods were chosen to include both quantitative and qualitative insights into this topic. In order to collect and analyze the data, an online questionnaire was distributed among English language teachers all around the Czech Republic. Further, some English language classes were observed on two different schools in the Olomouc region. The following chapter and subchapters bring out the

analysis and presentation of collected data obtained through both research methods, highlighting key findings and points.

5. Data Analysis and Results

In this chapter, the data collected through the questionnaire are analyzed and presented using graphs. Furthermore, the data from the classroom observations are analyzed and interpreted.

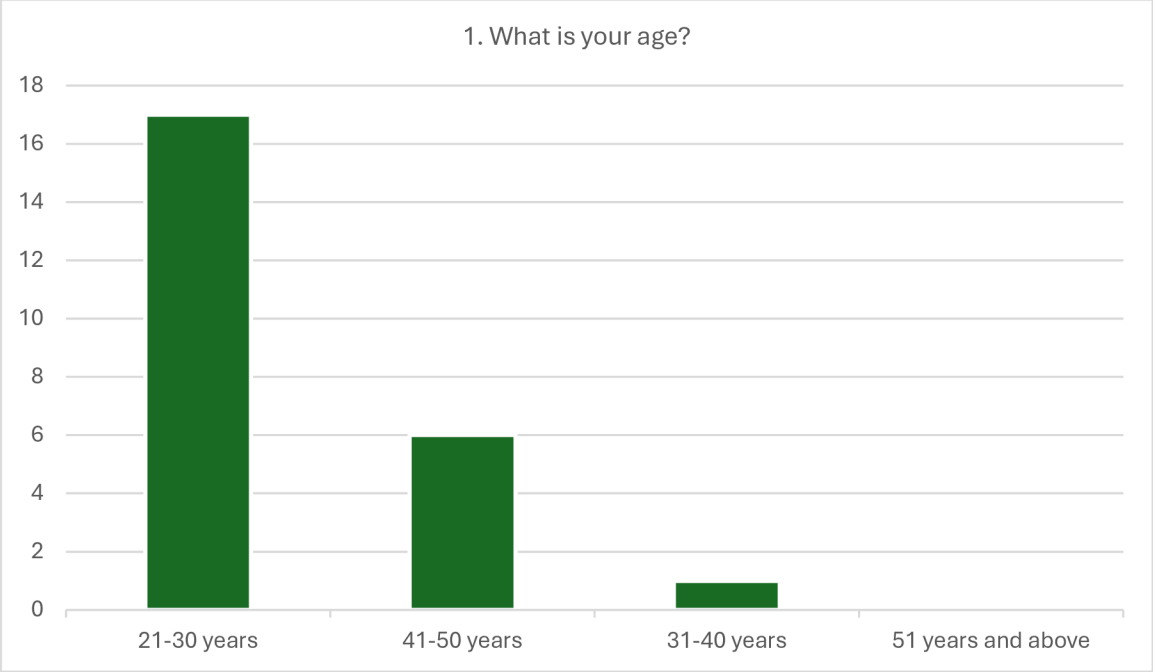
5.1. Questionnaire Results

This subchapter analyzes the answers from the questionnaire. As only twenty-four respondents completed the questionnaire, nominal values are used for clarity, not percentages.

5.1.1. Question 1 and 2

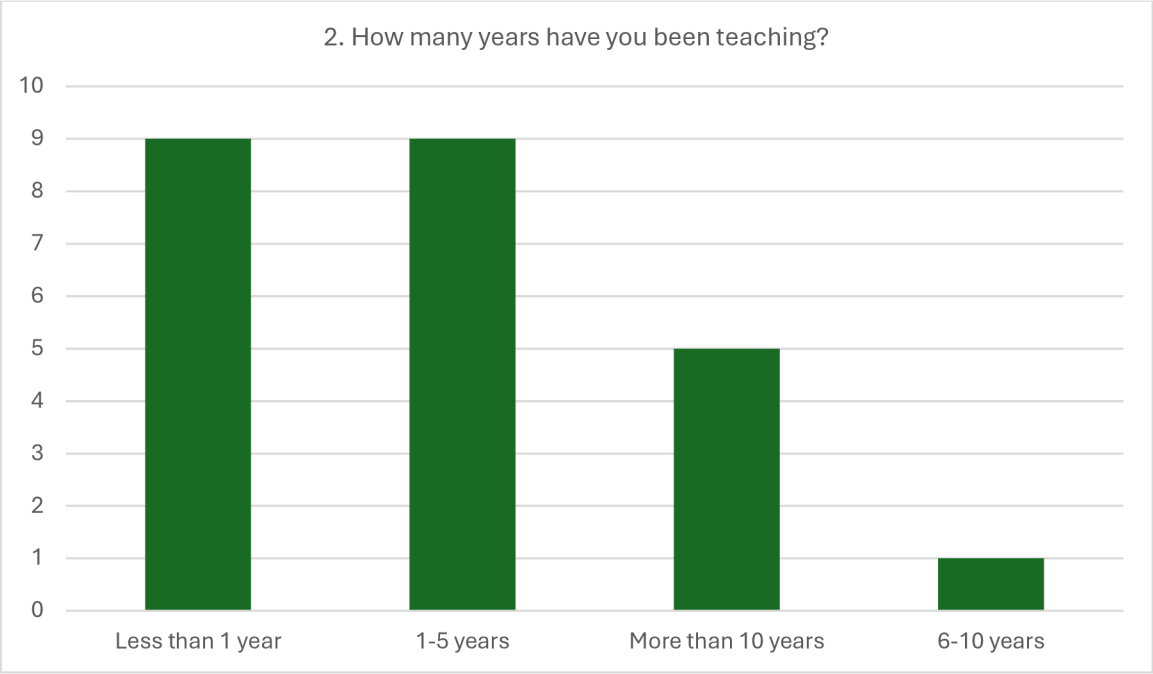
The first two questions asked respondents about some personal information and their professional background. Specifically, they asked about their age and the length of their teaching experience.

Figure 1: Age of the respondents



The first question was concerned with the age of the participants. Most of the participating teachers are between the ages of 21-30, and 17 in total. Only 1 of the participating teachers belongs to the category 31-40 years old. The third age group, aged between 41-50 years, covered 6 respondents. The age group not represented at all is 51 years and above, which did not include a single participant. From the data obtained, it is evident that this research is primarily concerned with the younger age group of teachers so the answers may have been affected by this personal factor.

Figure 2: The length of teaching practice



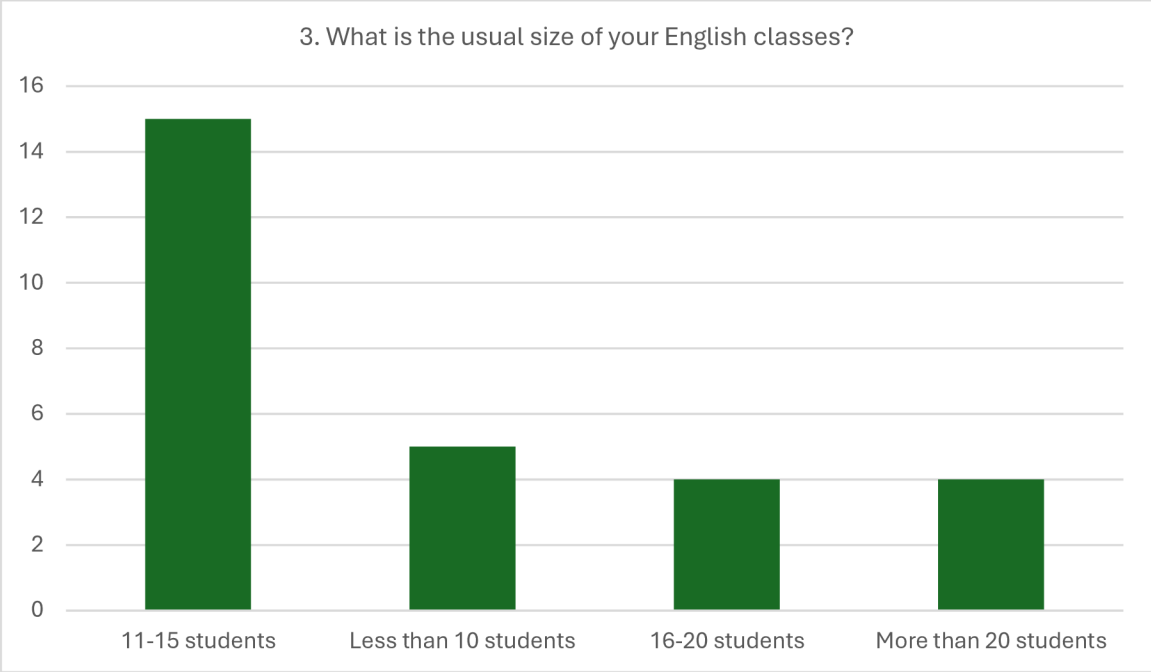
Question 2 referred to the respondents' length of teaching experience. From all respondents, 9 participants belong to the category of beginning teachers and have been teaching for less than 1 year. Other 9 participants have been teaching for 1-5 years. The least represented group in the research sample were the teachers who had been teaching for 6-10 years, with only 1 respondent. Teachers with the longest teaching experience of more than 10 years participated with a total of 5 teachers.

The length of teaching practice is another personal factor that may have influenced teachers' perceptions of this topic; thus it may be reflected in their further answers.

5.1.2. Question 3

The third question concerns the usual number of pupils in the English classes of the participating teachers.

Figure 3: Usual size of English classes



In terms of class size, most of the participating teachers had 11-15 pupils in their English classes. This group was represented by 15 respondents. Further, 5 teachers answered that the usual size of their English class is less than 10 students. Equally the least represented groups are the group of 16-20 pupils and the group of more than 20 pupils. Each group was represented by 4 respondents.

As most of the respondents chose that usual size of their English class is 11 to 15 pupils, it may be reflected into their other answers. When the class has a smaller number of pupils, teachers then may be able to approach each pupil more individually or at least, it is easier to maintain this approach. However, it is still upon each teacher and whether they prefer individual approach or not.

Nevertheless, when the teacher is more individualistic towards their pupils, it may affect the well-being or mental health of an individual.

5.1.3. Questions 4, 5 and 6

The fourth, fifth and sixth question are related to mental health promotion strategies as they asked respondents about the use of specific strategies, their effectiveness and frequency of use.

Figure 4: Frequency of use of mental health promotion strategies

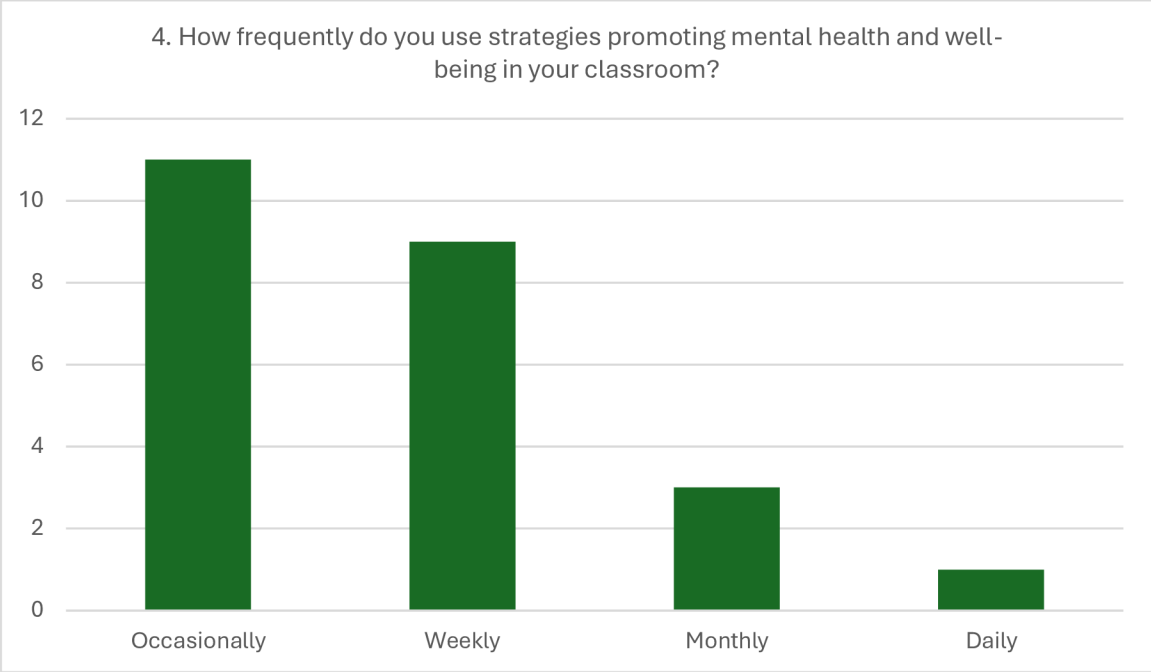
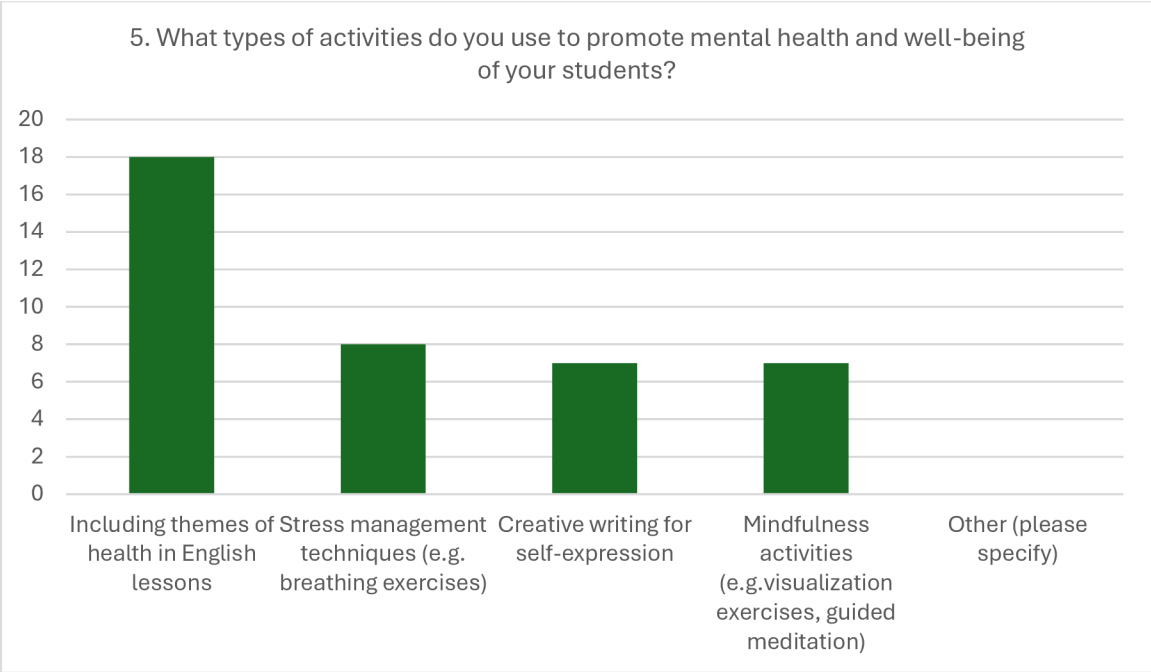


Figure number 4 shows how often teachers use strategies to promote mental health and well-being in their teaching. It was found out that most of the respondents (11) use those strategies occasionally. Another 9 respondents indicated that they use these strategies weekly, 3 respondents indicated that they use them monthly, and only 1 respondent selected the daily option.

The data shows that teachers use these activities and strategies rather sporadically or on a weekly basis. Based on the fact that all participants chose to use some of the methods, it can be assumed that they probably face some barriers that do not allow them to use these strategies more often in their English lessons.

Figure 5: Activities of mental health promotion used in ELT



Question 5 concerned specific activities that teachers use in English classes. There were 5 options to choose from, 1 of which was open-ended. For this answer, teachers could specify another method used, which was not selected here, however. Respondents could choose more than one option, so the total number of responses exceeds the total number of respondents (24).

The most frequently chosen option was "including themes of health into English lessons", which was chosen by 18 respondents. This was followed by stress management techniques (e.g. breathing exercises) with 8 responses and creative writing as a form of self-expression, which was selected by 7 respondents. The same number of respondents (7) indicated the use of mindfulness activities such as visualization exercises or guided meditation. The "other" option was not chosen by any respondent.

It is apparent that a wide range of strategies and methods have been identified. None of the teachers chose the "other" option, where they could have answer in their own words, so it can be assumed that these selected strategies may be used the most in English language classes.

Figure 6: Effectiveness of strategies in improving pupils' mental health and well-being

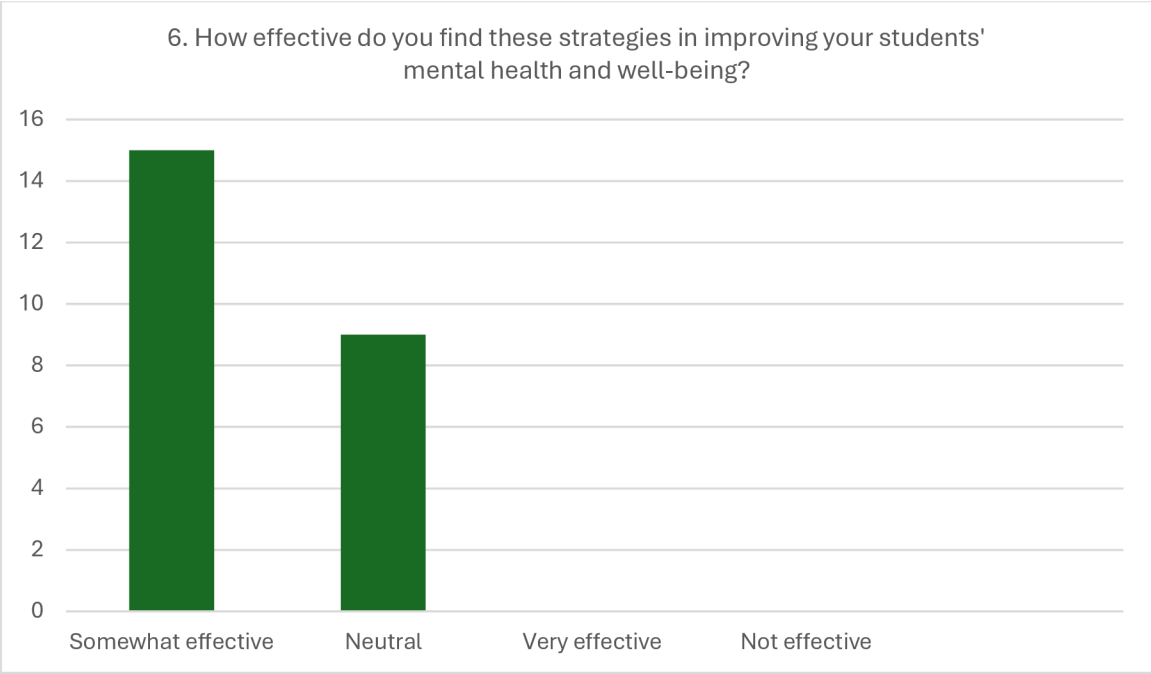


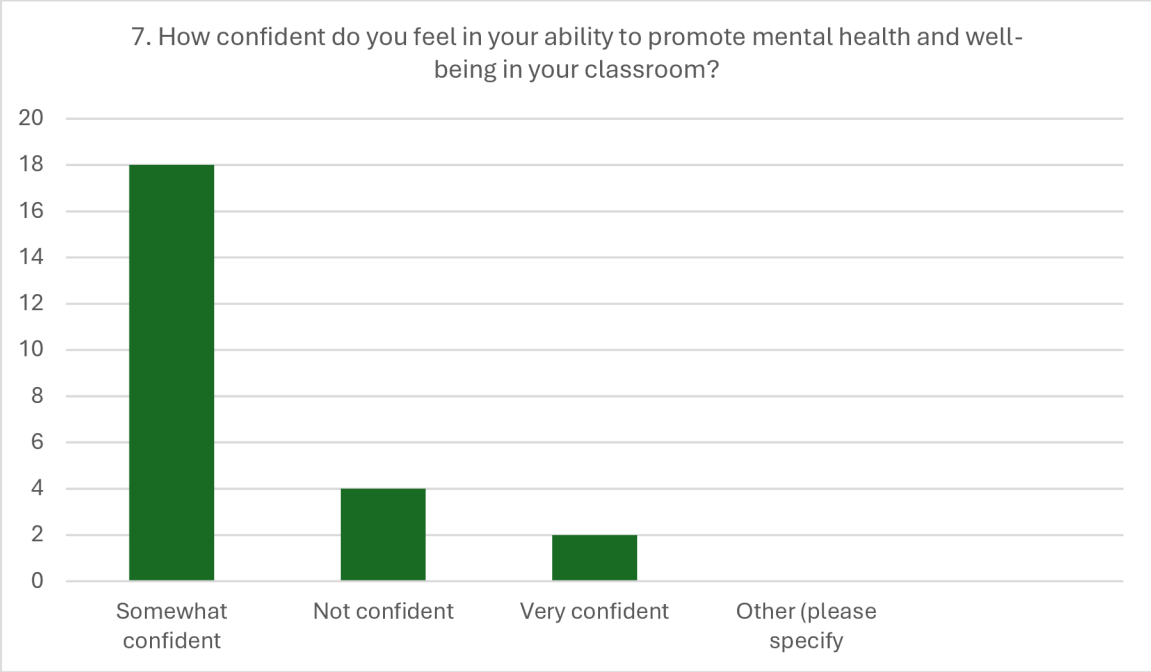
Figure 6 shows an evaluation of the effectiveness of strategies aimed at promoting pupils' mental health and well-being. The majority of respondents rated these strategies as somewhat effective – specifically 15 of them. This indicates that the majority of participating teachers perceive strategies aimed at promoting mental health and well-being positively, although they still maintain a degree of reserve in assessing. The second largest group of respondents (9) took a neutral stance ("neutral"), which can indicate that they are unsure of the actual effectiveness or that their impact is not evident. No participants found these strategies very effective or not effective for their students.

Overall, it can be claimed that teachers' perceptions of strategies to enhance mental health and well-being in the classroom are rather positive, but with a certain degree of caution.

5.1.4. Question 7

Question number 7 asked teachers about their confidence in their own abilities in terms of supporting pupils' mental health and well-being.

Figure 7: Confidence in skills of promoting mental health



Question 7 concerned the confidence of teachers in their own abilities to enhance the mental health and well-being of their pupils. From the figure it is evident that most of the participants (18) feel somewhat confident about their abilities. Only 4 of the respondents do not feel confident about their skills. The smallest number of teachers (2) answered that they feel very confident in their ability to promote mental health and well-being in their English classroom. The last option was open-ended, so the teachers were given the opportunity to answer in their own words. However, not a single respondent chose this option.

5.1.5. Question 8, 9 and 10

The eighth and ninth questions were about specific training or professional development for teachers in mental health promotion. The tenth question is also linked to this as teachers were asked about the challenges, they face in supporting pupils' mental health in ELT.

Question 8 asked teachers if they had ever received any specific training. If the answer was "yes", they were asked to answer question 9, but if the answer was "no", they were allowed to skip to question 10. Question 10 then concerned the challenges of those teachers in promoting mental health and well-being among their pupils.

Figure 8: Specific training or professional development in promoting mental health and well-being at schools

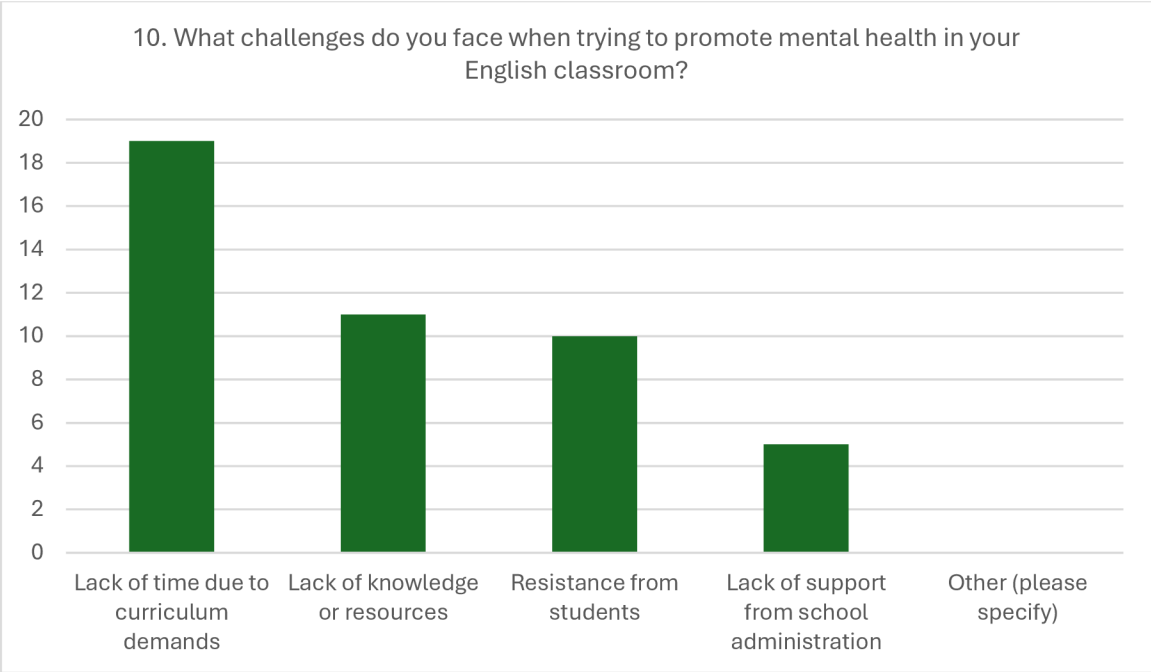
Out of the 24 respondents, a large majority, namely 19 respondents, answered that they had never received specific training or professional development in mental health promotion and mental well-being, and only 5 of the teacher participants had received any such training. The 19 participants therefore skipped the following question number 9 and answered only question number 10.

This may suggest some limitations in the Czech educational system, as most of the participating teachers have never received any specific training. However, it is not apparent for what reason they have never taken any such training as the question does not ask about this, so we can infer that there may be limitations on the part of the school or personal reasons or obstacles on the part of the teacher.

Figure 9: The usefulness of special training

As mentioned above, question number 9 could have been answered only by those respondents, who received any training or professional development in promoting mental health and well-being. This question offered a total of 4 different possible answers, 1 of which was open-ended, allowing participants to describe the answer in their own words. However, all 5 respondents who had received any special training or professional development answered that they found it somewhat useful, which may be considered successful.

Figure 10: Challenges in promoting mental health in English classroom



Question 10 concerned specific challenges that teachers often face when they try to promote mental health in their English classes. There were 5 options to choose from, 1 of which was open-ended. For this answer, teachers could specify another challenge, which was not mentioned here. Respondents were able to choose more than one option, so the total number of responses exceeds the total number of respondents (24).

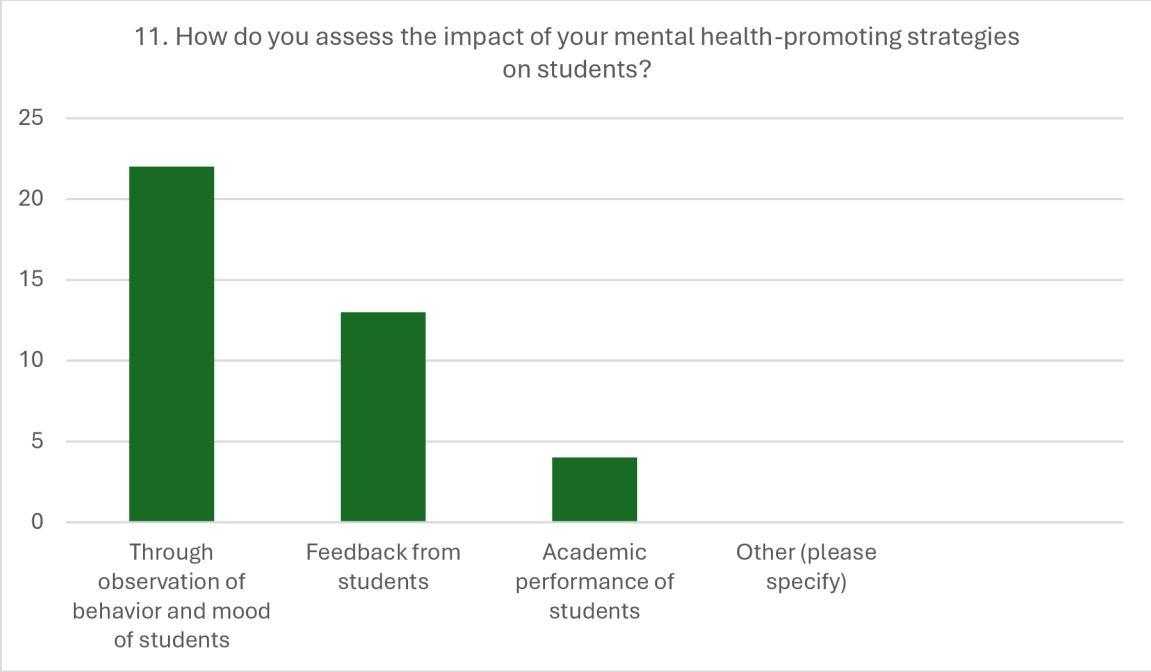
As the figure shows, the largest number of respondents, 19 in total, chose lack of time due to curriculum demands as the biggest barrier to supporting their pupils' mental health. 11 participants chose as another challenge their lack of knowledge or resources. The resistance from students was perceived as another obstacle by overall 10 respondents. The last category, "lack of support from the school administration", was considered a challenge in supporting pupils' mental health by 5 participating teachers. However, none of the teachers chose an open-ended response "other" that was intended to describe another challenge, that they may had to face.

5.1.6. Question 11, 12 and 13

Questions 11, 12 and 13 were concerned with the teachers' view on pupils. Specifically, they addressed the perceived impact of the strategies used on pupils, the mental health challenges pupils must face nowadays, and their typical responses to the mental health promotion strategies and activities.

Questions 11 and 12 offered multiple possible answers, and 1 of them was an open-ended answer. Respondents were able to choose more than one option, so the total number of responses exceeded the total number of respondents (24). For question 13, it was possible to select only 1 answer from the options offered or to answer with an open-ended response.

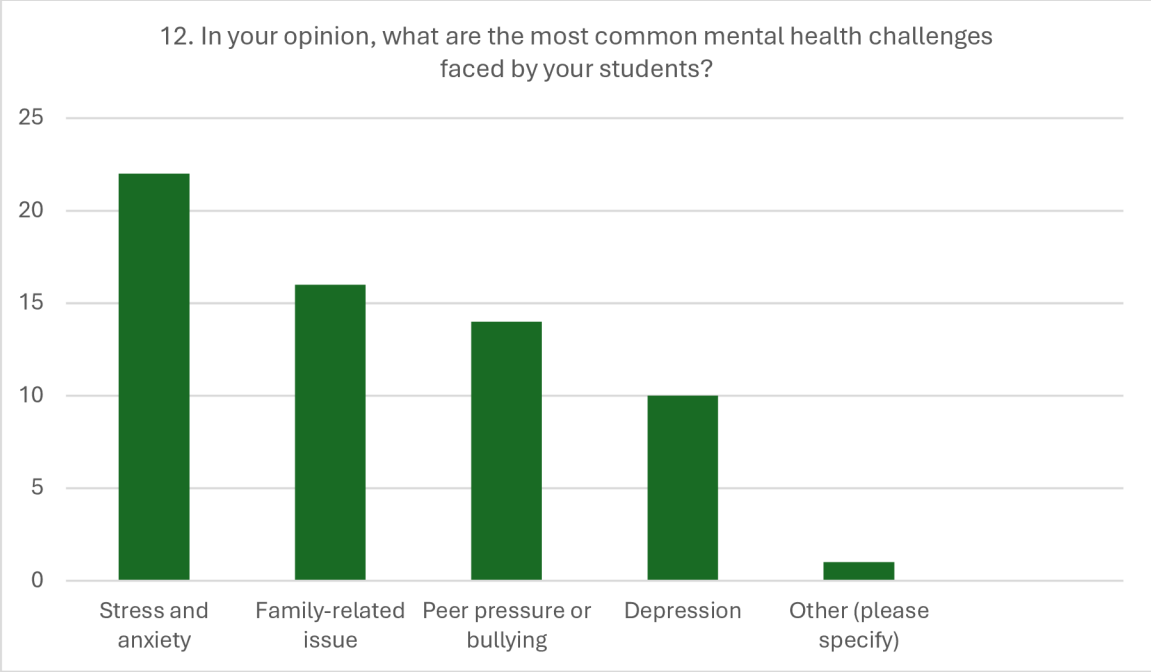
Figure 11: Assessing impact of mental health promoting strategies on pupils



The most frequently selected response was that they assess the impact of their strategies on students through observation of behavior and mood of students, which was chosen by a total of 22 respondents. Student feedback was another possible way of assessing the impact of the strategies used on students, and this method was chosen by a total of 13 teachers. The least number of participants (4) selected the answer "academic performance of students". None of the respondents chose the open-ended response option.

This may suggest that the effect of teachers' use of strategies to promote mental health and wellbeing may be noticeable immediately by the way pupils behave or by their mood.

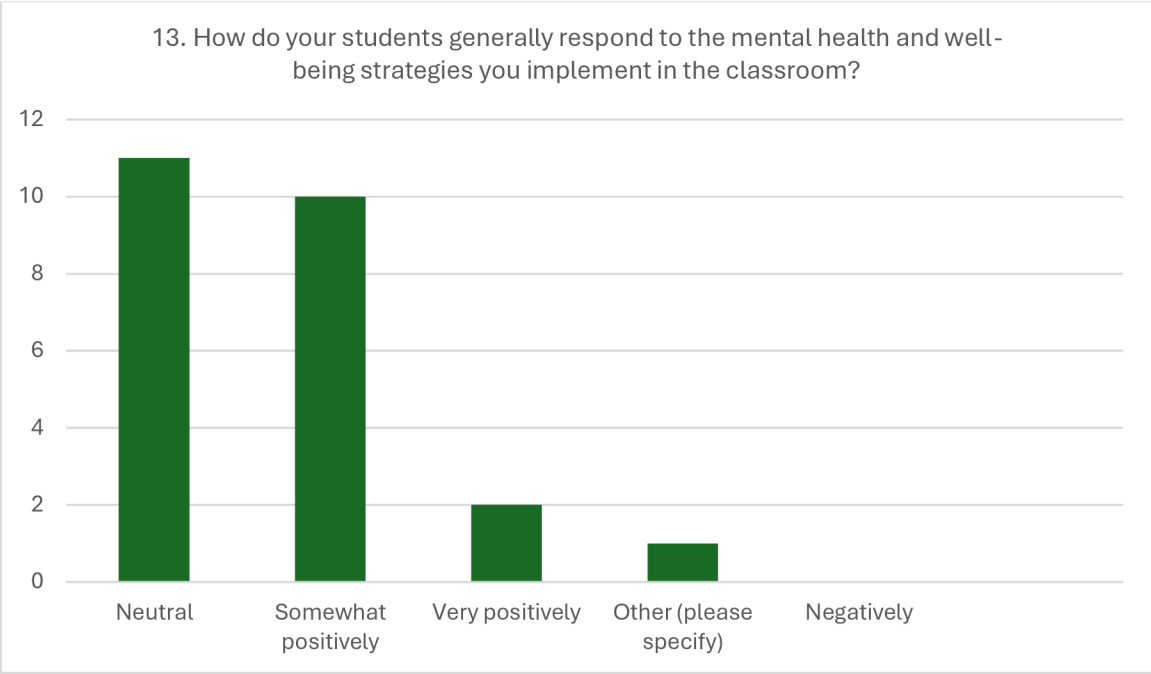
Figure 12: The most common mental health difficulties in pupils from the perspective of teachers



Question number 12 was related to teachers' opinion about the most common mental health challenges among their pupils. 22 respondents decided to choose stress and anxiety as one of the most common mental health challenges faced by their pupils. A slightly smaller number of respondents, 16 in total, considered the most common mental health problems among their pupils to be those related to family issues. Peer pressure and bullying were chosen by 14 participants and depression by 10 participants. There was 1 respondent who chose the open-ended answer "other (please specify)", but they did not manage to specify it for some reason.

It is clear that pupils suffer from a variety of mental disorders and therefore it is important to address those mental health problems.

Figure 13: Responses of pupils to the teachers' strategies



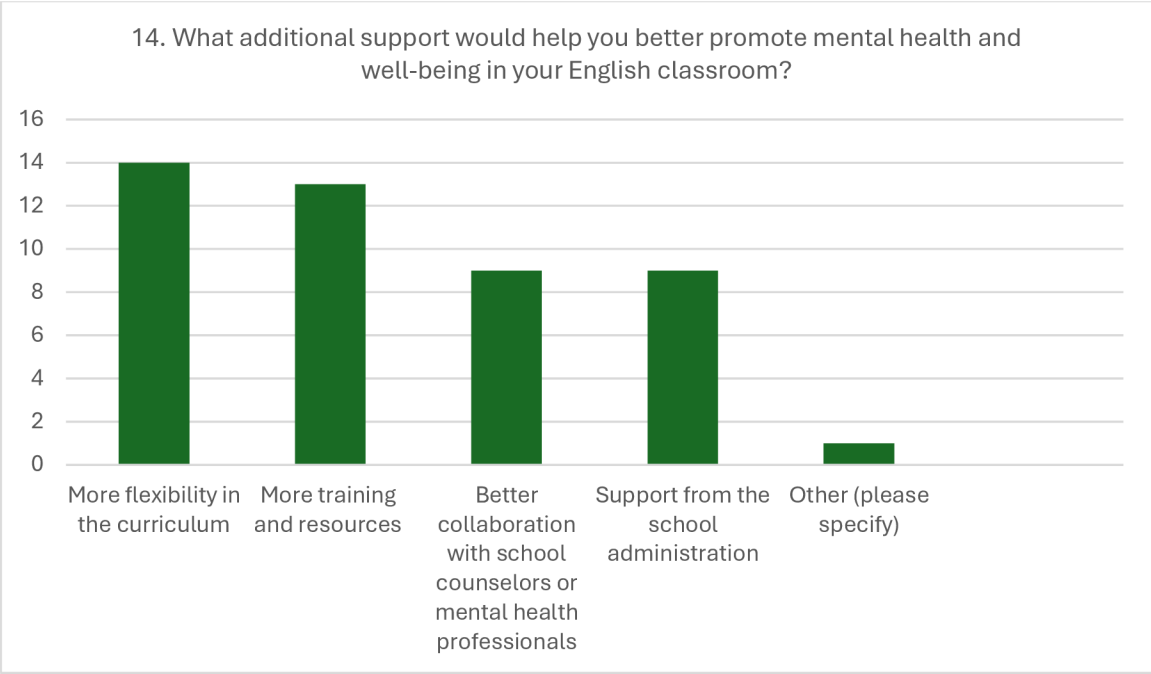
This question concerned teachers' views on how pupils generally respond to mental health and well-being promotion strategies in ELT. 11 of the 24 participating teachers perceived pupils' reactions neutral and 10 of them somewhat positively. Only 2 of all respondents perceived these pupils' responses very positively. The open-ended response for other options was selected by 1 respondent, but as with the previous question, they only selected this option but did not specify it in more detail.

These responses may indicate that pupils are somewhat distant from these strategies and may not be able to appreciate them. However, there may also be a problem on the part of teachers who may not communicate the meaning and importance of these strategies to pupils.

5.1.7. Question 14 and 15

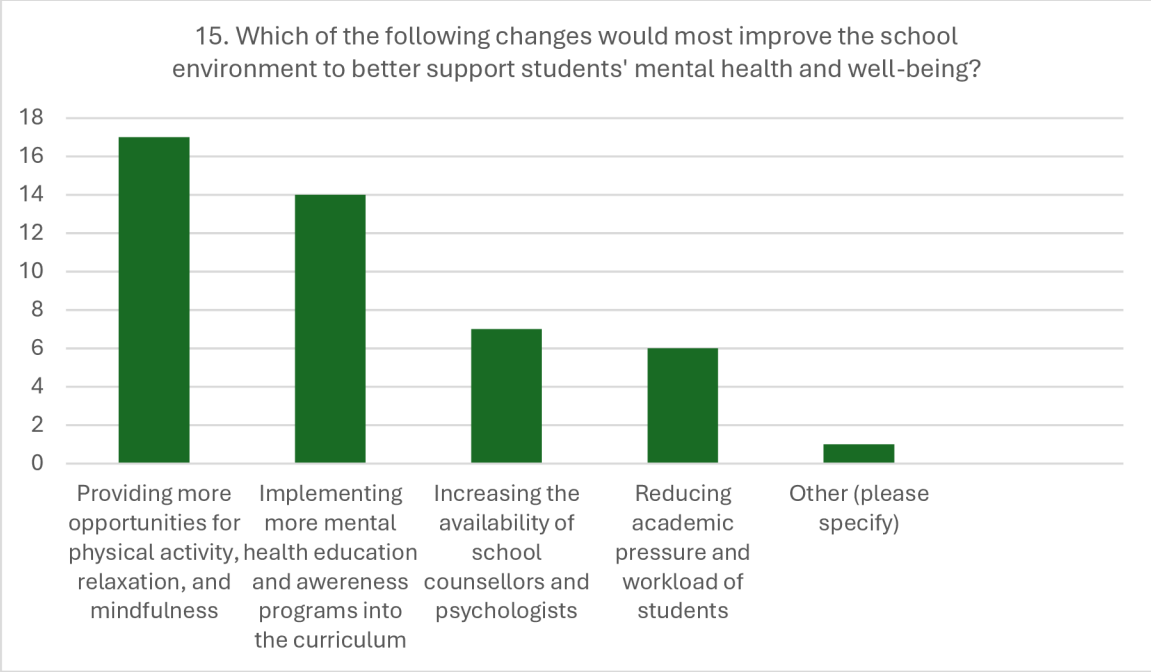
Fourteenth and fifteenth question focused on support and possible changes that would have eased teachers' ability to support their pupils' mental health in English classes. Question 14 focused specifically on teacher support, while question 15 was about possible changes to the school environment. Both questions offered multiple possible answers, as well as an open-ended response option.

Figure 14: Support for teachers to better support pupils' mental health and well-being



This question was regarding the type of support that would help teachers to better support pupils' mental health and well-being in the classroom. More flexibility in the curriculum was perceived as support that would help them by 14 respondents and more training and resources were perceived as a source of help by 13 respondents. The answers "better collaboration with school counselors or mental health professionals" and "support from the school administration" were both chosen by 9 participants. As with the previous questions, there was an open-ended response option as well, which was chosen by 1 participant, however, they did not specify their answer.

Figure 15: Changes to the school environment to better support pupils' mental health and wellbeing.



The final question in the questionnaire - question 15 - asked respondents which change they thought would most help improve the school environment so that it better supports pupils' mental health and well-being. 17 respondents felt that the change that would most help to improve was providing more opportunities for physical activity, relaxation and mindfulness.

Another 14 responding teachers thought that implementing more mental health education and awareness programs into the school curriculum would help the school setting to be better at enhancing mental health and well-being of pupils.

The answer "increasing the availability of school counsellors and psychologists" was chosen by 7 participants. 6 of all respondents considered reducing academic pressure and workload as one of the important changes that would help to improve the school environment to better support of mental health among pupils. For the last question there was also an open-ended answer option, and it was selected by 1 respondent as well who did not clarify their answer.

The findings suggest that teachers are likely to want to change the school environment to better support pupils' mental health and wellbeing. The results show that teachers believe that schools do not have enough opportunities for pupils to exercise and relax. Further, it suggest that teachers would be willing to implement those mental health promotion strategies into lessons,

as they answered that mental health education and awareness programs should be implemented more into the school curriculum.

5.2. Observation Results

This subchapter interprets findings from the author's teaching practice, specifically from observations of English language teaching in two different elementary schools, located in the Olomouc region.

5.2.1. The first observation

The first observation took place in a small village elementary school. As already mentioned in this thesis, it was a school in the Olomouc region. A total of 4 English language lessons were observed, all of which were taught by the same teacher. All lessons focused either on revising vocabulary or grammar, exposition of new knowledge, practicing language skills, playing games or any entertaining activities. According to the teacher's time-thematic plan, they have planned some of the lessons related to the theme of health. However, while neither observed lesson covered the topic of health or mental health specifically, some activities or strategies were observed that could be considered a way of promoting mental health or well-being. The observation sheets are available in appendices.

At the beginning of each lesson, the teacher was interested in pupils' mood, which was evident from asking the pupils "how are you doing today". Further, the teacher had a positive attitude towards their pupils all the time, which may contributed to the reduction of stress and tension in the classroom as well as it benefited to the whole classroom environment. It was also observed that the teacher tried to make the students feel comfortable when they made a mistake. They constantly reminded the pupils that making a mistake was a normal part of the learning process, which was motivating for them, and they did not have to feel pressure or other negative feelings about making a mistake.

Another point from observation was implementing physical activity into the English lessons. Each lesson that was observed included some activity that required movement, even just a little bit. For example, pupils had to perform a pantomime or repeat various activities in the "Simon says" game. Pupils also moved around the classroom when they formed pairs or groups to do collaborative work.

Furthermore, another element observed is the feedback and the manner in which it was requested from the pupils. At the end of each lesson, pupils were asked to sit calmly and close

their eyes. After the pupils had calmed down for a while, with their eyes closed, they were asked to indicate with a thumbs up or thumbs down whether they liked or disliked the lesson. Thumbs up meant they did, thumbs down meant they did not. They then rated their own activity in the lesson in the same way, with a thumbs up indicating that they were satisfied with their performance and a thumbs down indicating that they were not.

Overall, it was evident from this observation that the teacher was interested in the pupils and how they were feeling. They contributed to a positive and non-stressful classroom environment with their friendly manner. There was also evident physical activity in every lesson observed. Further, the teacher made some effort to calm the pupils down at the end of the lesson to provide feedback.

5.2.2. The second observation

The second observation took place in a larger urban elementary school, also located in the Olomouc region. 3 observations of English language classes were conducted at this school, all taught by the same teacher. The lessons consisted of a variety of activities, whether introducing new knowledge, revision, practicing language skills or playing various games. Similarly to the first observation, none of the lessons observed were directly related to the topic of health or mental health. However, according to the teacher's time-thematic plan, some lessons were dedicated to the topic of health, but later in the school year. Although none of the lessons observed focused specifically on health, as in the first observation, there were still elements of mental health and well-being support.

The first observed element is implementation of physical activity into the lesson. The teacher themselves claimed that they try to include some kind of movement into every English lesson, so for instance, the pupils played the game "find someone, who", where they had to go around the class and ask their classmates if they match some information. Further, for instance, pupils were doing miming activities, which also required movement.

During all the lessons observed, it was evident that the teacher was calm and had a friendly, encouraging attitude towards the pupils, which benefited the classroom environment. The overall atmosphere of each lesson was calm and during the observation there was no evidence of any tension or fear on the part of the pupils to speak and express themselves. From the observer's perspective, it was evident that most students felt more at ease due to the teacher's approach. The teacher also had a very individual approach towards the pupils most of the time, which can be seen as an important element in English language classes.

It has also been observed that the teacher gives students homework very sporadically so as not to overload them, as it is said that students are overloaded nowadays, which can cause more pressure or stress. This was not only observed but also mentioned by the teacher themself when they explained that they give homework only occasionally but rather not at all.

To summarize, the second observation showed that although the English language lessons observed did not directly involve themes of health, mental health or well-being, there were elements that supported these areas. The teacher involved physical activities on a regular basis that promoted not only pupils' activity but also their concentration and motivation. The overall atmosphere in the classroom was calm and friendly, which had a positive effect on pupils' willingness to cooperate with the teacher.

5.3. Discussion

This diploma thesis aimed to explore what strategies, if any, are using English language teachers in their lessons to promote mental health and well-being among their pupils at secondary schools. The previous parts of this chapter present data collected through online questionnaire, which was filled in by English language teachers. Another source of data is from observation during author's teaching practices, where English lessons were observed on two different elementary schools located in the Olomouc region. The information gathered and observed is interpreted and compared in this subchapter also in the context of what is covered in the Framework Educational Program.

In the Framework Educational Program, there are listed some thematic areas for English language, that would be related to health. As already mentioned in this diploma thesis, there are some recommended themes that can be taught in English language classes. These include topics such as health care, eating habits, emotions and moods. (RVP ZV, 2023, p. 29). Nevertheless, those topics are only recommended, and the Framework Educational Program does not define any strategies for promoting mental health and well-being in English classes, thus each school or individual teacher must choose whether to implement these topics or not. For the reasons mentioned above, it is to be expected that not every teacher is addressing these topics in English language classes.

The topics of mental health and well-being are defined mostly in the subject Education for Health. However, this subject, together with Physical Education, falls under the educational area of People and Health. This whole educational area has a minimum time allocation of 10 hours per week for grades 6-9 (RVP ZV, pp. 140-144). The school management is then tasked

with dividing these hours between the subjects of Education for Health and Physical Education. However, they also have so-called “available hours”, which are extra hours that they can freely distribute among the subjects. It is therefore up to the head teacher to decide how many teaching hours the Education for Health subject receives. Based on my educational experience, I would argue that Education for Health does not receive much space in schools. Therefore, I suggest that the topics of health and mental health or well-being should be addressed across the whole curriculum.

The data collected from the questionnaire show that most teachers include health-related topics in their English classes to promote their pupils’ mental health and well-being. This was also found from the observations as the observed teachers reported that they implement these topics in their lessons, although they did not do so during the observations for this research. Another identified strategy used by teachers is stress management techniques, but this was not quite evident during the observation. However, during the first observation, the teacher made the pupils sit down and close their eyes at the end of each lesson, so this could be considered a stress management technique or even a relaxation technique, because as Smith (2005) explains, there are many different techniques, and everyone can choose any activity that helps them to be soothed and that suits them best. In this case, the teacher did not actually label it as a stress management technique, however it was used to calm the pupils down and make them feel at ease. Teachers also tend to implement physical activity into ELT, which can boost energy levels, alleviate stress or increase focus and motivation (Mental health foundation, 2021). In fact, it was evident during the observations that teachers try to implement at least a little movement in ELT teaching so that the lessons are not monotonous.

Although the results of the questionnaire showed that some teachers implement strategies such as creative writing or mindfulness activities into their lessons, these particular techniques did not emerge during the observation of the lessons. However, it is important to note that the observation involved only two teachers and a limited number of lessons. Therefore, no general conclusions can be drawn about the contradiction between the declared and actual practice. It is possible that these strategies were used outside the scope of the observed lessons.

Related to this is the frequency of use of these strategies. The majority of teachers reported that they used strategies to promote pupils’ mental health and well-being only occasionally, which may have been perceived during the observations. I suggest that this may be related to some of the barriers that teachers face in this area as identified by this research. Teachers consider lack

of time due to curriculum demands to be the biggest challenge for them. I assume that this is due to the fact that mental health topics are not compulsory in English language classes and therefore teachers focus more on what is central to the subject. However, teachers can also access these topics through the cross-cutting themes that may be implemented in English language classes, but this depends on each school's implementation of these themes in its curriculum (RVP, 2023).

Another barrier for teachers is a lack of knowledge and resources, which may result in teachers using strategies to promote their pupils' health and well-being only sporadically or not at all. In fact, the Czech education system does not precisely define the prevention of pupils' mental health in schools and rather focuses on their risky behaviors (ČSU, 2025). Some changes should occur by 2030, because as mentioned earlier in this thesis, the National Action Plan for Mental Health 2020-2030 has defined some changes that should occur by 2030 and one of them is precisely the formation of teacher competence to promote pupils' mental health (Ibid).

Further, teachers were found to appreciate additional support to better support their pupils' mental health and wellbeing in ELT, citing greater curriculum flexibility and more training and resources as the main means to help. This may suggest that teachers would be willing to use these methods of support but would likely need appropriate help to do so. What should also be noted is that most of the teachers did not receive any specific training or professional development in the area of mental health promotion, thus it is evident that some support for teachers should be implemented.

Many participating teachers identified their strategies for promoting mental health and wellbeing in ELT as somewhat effective, but some also considered them neutral. During the observation it was evident that the behavior and attitude of both teachers contributed positively to the atmosphere and climate of the classroom, as there was no apparent stress or pressure on the pupils. Thus, it may be also perceived as somewhat effective. However, from the questionnaire it is evident that according to the teachers, pupils generally respond to those strategies neutrally or somewhat positively. Observation in practice showed that teachers' behavior contributes to a non-stressful and pleasant environment, which is also an important factor influencing well-being and mental health (WHO, 2014).

Nevertheless, for these strategies to be truly effective and truly support pupils' mental health and well-being, it is important to integrate them into everyday life (NIMH, 2024), so this may

be the reason why many teachers perceived their methods and strategies as only quite effective or even neutral, as they do not implement them into their lessons on a daily basis.

I dare say that the school setting should be focused on mental health and well-being promotion, however, it is also about the approach of each person, in this case, pupils' approach. If one is not willing to enhance one's own mental health and well-being in their free time, then it might be difficult for the teachers to make the pupils interested in those types of activities at school. In other words, pupils should be motivated and guided to acquire a positive attitude towards their own mental health and well-being, to care for and support it in their own lives. This can be achieved precisely by involving them in activities that enhance their mental health, and by teachers providing them with the knowledge and skills that are essential for gaining a positive attitude towards pupils' own physical and mental health.

5.4. Limitations and suggestions for future research

This subchapter further discusses and describes some limitations of this research as well as suggestions for some other research that may be done in the future.

Research of this diploma thesis is subject to certain limitations that should be noted. One of the main limitations of this study is the small sample size, which may affect the generalizability of the results. Although many schools all over the Czech Republic were contacted and asked for distribution among their teachers and the questionnaire was shared online as well, a large sample of teachers was still not found. I would argue that one of the reasons for this may be the topic at hand. The topic of mental health and well-being is still little addressed in the educational setting, and some teachers may still not know how to handle it, which may be one of the reasons why they did not want to contribute to this study.

Another limitation is the sample of teachers observed. For further research, it would be more valuable to observe several different teachers and lessons. It is also important to note that the responses reported in the questionnaire may reflect not only general teacher practices but also temporary personal circumstances or other issues such as class size. In classrooms with large numbers of pupils, it may be more difficult for teachers to effectively implement well-being strategies, which may have influenced their responses.

Further, one of the limitations of the research is also the fact that there were open-ended responses for some questions labelled "other" in the questionnaire. While some respondents chose this option, they did not specify it further. This fact limited the possibility of a deeper

analysis of their answers and the interpretation of their motivations or specific views on the issue. Overall, this thesis research has its limitations, of which the author is aware, and it would be better if these limitations were removed by further possible research.

As for suggestions for further research in this area, I dare say that it would be better to conduct research over a longer period of time. Another recommendation might be to include a wider sample of schools and teachers to get a broader perspective. In addition, students' perspectives on those strategies that promote mental health, and well-being can be included to evaluate their effectiveness from other angles.

Conclusion

This diploma thesis aimed to investigate the extent to which teachers implement strategies to promote pupils' mental health and well-being into English language teaching, and to identify which specific approaches are being employed.

The theoretical part of the thesis presents the theoretical background of concepts such as mental health, mental disorders, well-being and factors that affect mental health. As the topic of mental health is quite complex, it is defined and described from different points of view. Furthermore, this thesis presents those mental illnesses that are most common among children and young people nowadays, for instance depression, anxiety or suicidal tendencies. As far as influences on mental health are concerned, genetic and environmental influences are mentioned and explained. The influence of Internet and social media is being highlighted as well, as children and young adults are spending more time there nowadays.

Secondly, the theoretical part outlines different methods that can be used to promote mental health and well-being in general and then explores specific strategies that can be used in school settings, particularly in ELT. For the ELT, the author has selected those strategies and those methods that may my applicable and useful for both teaching language skills and enhancing mental health with well-being. Those chapters present methods such as implementing health methods into ELT, stress management techniques in ELT, mindfulness activities in ELT and creative writing in ELT.

Further, the promotion of mental health and well-being in Czech schools is described to make the point about the importance of highlighting these topics, as they are not addressed much in school settings, as well as prevention in Czech schools, which also has its limitations. Although the Czech education system tries to define the current problems and tries to emphasize the importance of promoting mental health in pupils, this fact is still not quite reflected in practice. Currently, however, the issue of mental health and well-being and its greater and more effective inclusion in the school curriculum is still being addressed in society.

The second part of this diploma thesis, the practical part, firstly describes used methodology together with research aim and questions. The author defines the main aim and four research questions that are to be answered. For this research, two different methods were chosen – questionnaire and observation. Regarding the first research question it was confirmed that teachers do employ different strategies to promote pupils' mental health and well-being in English language classes, although their implementation varies. Firstly, the results from the

questionnaire show that teachers mostly implement the themes of health in ELT, whereas the observations confirmed the same. The questionnaire also showed the use of, for example, mindfulness activities or creative writing. Overall, the observation showed that teachers tend not to use these methods, although according to their words they sometimes do, however, only the occasional implementation of physical activities in lessons or the overall positive and non-stressful attitude of the teacher was observed, which contributes to creating a relaxed classroom environment.

Regarding the second research question, which concerned the effectiveness of the use of these strategies, most teachers perceived these methods and strategies as fairly effective or neutral. The reaction of pupils to these methods and strategies is also perceived by the teachers as rather neutral or quite positive. This perhaps suggests that teachers are not emphasizing enough the importance of promoting mental health and well-being, which can lead to pupils not taking it seriously.

The third research question revealed that teachers face some barriers to implementing these strategies to support their pupils' mental health. The most common problem is lack of time due to curriculum demands and lack of appropriate knowledge and resources. I would suggest that these problems may be related to the frequency of use of these strategies.

The final research question asked about the frequency of use of these strategies in English language classes. However, the questionnaire and observations suggest that teachers use these methods sporadically rather than on a daily basis. This fact may be related to the barriers mentioned above. It is evident that teachers face certain challenges in implementing those methods and strategies and this may then lead to teachers not being able to use the strategies to promote the health and well-being of their pupils more frequently. However, the issue is whether teachers want to use these strategies more often, thus this may be a matter for further research.

Overall, this diploma thesis' research demonstrates that secondary school teachers employ a variety of strategies in their English language classes with the aim of supporting their pupils' mental health and overall well-being. The findings suggests that many teachers are aware of the importance of addressing mental health in the educational setting, however, they also encounter various challenges, that may cause that teachers are not able to use those strategies and methods in their English language classes. The findings presented in this diploma thesis offer only

limited insight into this complex issue and point to several issues, thus further investigation is recommended to explore this issue in greater depth.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Vážené respondentky, vážení respondenti,

jmenuji se Adéla Valouchová a jsem studentkou 2. ročníku navazujícího magisterského studia Pedagogické fakulty Univerzity Palackého v Olomouci. Ráda bych Vás požádala o vyplnění tohoto dotazníku, který je součástí mé diplomové práce s názvem „Promoting Mental Health and Well-being: Teachers‘ Strategies in English Classroom at Secondary Schools“.

Cílem mého výzkumu je zjistit, jaké strategie využívají učitelé Anglického jazyka na 2. stupních základních škol k podpoře duševního zdraví a pohody svých žáků.

Vyplnění dotazníku Vám zabere přibližně 10 minut. Vaše odpovědi jsou anonymní a budou použity výhradně pro účely mého výzkumu.

Předem Vám děkuji za Váš čas a ochotu přispět k této studii.

S přáním hezkého dne,

Bc. Adéla Valouchová

1. What is your age?

a) 21-30

b) 31-40

c) 41-50

d) 51 and above

2. How many years have you been teaching?

a) Less than 1 year

b) 1-5 years

c) 6-10 years

d) More than 10 years

3. What is the usual size of your English classes?

a) Less than 10 students

b) 11-15 students

c) 16-20 students

d) More than 20 students

4. How frequently do you use strategies promoting mental health and well-being in your classroom?

a) Daily

b) Weekly

c) Monthly

d) Occasionally

5. What types of activities do you use to promote mental health and well-being of your students? (Select all that apply)

a) Including themes of health in lessons

b) Stress management techniques (e.g. breathing exercises)

c) Creative writing for self-expression

d) Mindfulness activities (e.g. visualization exercises, guided meditation)

e) Other (please specify)

6. How effective do you find these strategies in improving your students' mental health and well-being?

a) Very effective

b) Somewhat effective

c) Neutral

d) Not effective

7. How confident do you feel in your ability to promote mental health and well-being in your classroom?

a) Very confident

b) Somewhat confident

c) Not confident

d) Other (please specify)

8. Have you received any specific training or professional development on promoting mental health and well-being in the classroom?

a) Yes

b) No (skip to the question number 10)

9. If yes, how useful did you find this training?

a) Very useful

b) Somewhat useful

c) Not useful

d) Other (please specify)

10. What challenges do you face when trying to promote mental health in your English classroom? (Select all that apply)

a) Lack of time due to curriculum demands

b) Lack of support from school administration

c) Lack of knowledge or resources

d) Resistance from students

e) Other (please specify)

11. How do you assess the impact of your mental health-promoting strategies on students?

a) Through observation of behavior and mood of students

b) Feedback from students

c) Academic performance of students

d) Other (please specify)

12. In your opinion, what are the most common mental health challenges faced by your students? (Select all that apply)

a) Stress and anxiety

b) Depression

c) Peer pressure or bullying

d) Family-related issues

e) Other (please specify)

13. How do your students generally respond to the mental health and well-being strategies you implement in the classroom?

a) Very positively

b) Somewhat positively

c) Neutral

d) Negatively

e) Other (please specify)

14. What additional support would help you better promote mental health and well-being in your English classroom? (Select all that apply)

a) More training and resources

b) Better collaboration with school counselors or mental health professionals

c) More flexibility in the curriculum

d) Support from the school administration

e) Other (please specify)

15. Which of the following changes would most improve the school environment to better support students' mental health and well-being? (Select all that apply)

a) Implementing more mental health education and awareness programs into the curriculum (e.g., workshops, training for students and teachers, etc.).

b) Increasing the availability of school counsellors and psychologists

c) Reducing academic pressure and workload of students

d) Providing more opportunities for physical activity, relaxation, and mindfulness (e.g., creating quiet spaces for relaxation, implementing yoga or mindfulness sessions, etc.)

e) Other (please specify)

Appendix B: Observation sheet 1 (teaching practice 1)

Date: 1.3.2024

Class: 6.A

Theme of the lesson: Animals and young animals

Type of the lesson: Exposition of new vocabulary

Aim of the lesson: Not mentioned

Methods: Activation, motivation, revision

Forms: Individual work, whole-class work, pair work

Key competencies: Communication, problem solving, learning,

Aids: Student's book, Workbook, Exercise book, PC, television

Other comments: The teacher used different teaching methods and forms. At the beginning of the lesson, she tried to motivate the students by asking them about their holidays, how they were doing and so on. Further, she was trying to motivate them during the whole lesson, for example by praising and by pointing out that mistake is not a bad thing.

This lesson was focused on the new vocabulary of young animals with the practice of present continuous. Most of the time, every student was included in the lesson; even the slow learners were given an opportunity to express themselves. I must appreciate that the teacher tried to implement a movement activity in this lesson, as students had to mime the animals to each other and guess.

At the end of the lesson, pupils were asked to close their eyes and relax. Then, while having their eyes closed, they first rated the lesson by indicating the grade with their fingers and then, they rated themselves. Through this, pupils were able to calm down and give some feedback as well.

Appendix C: Observation sheet 2 (teaching practice 1)

Date: 12.3.2024

Class: 6.A

Theme of the lesson: Animals and young animals

Type of the lesson: Fixation and revision of the vocabulary and grammar

Aim of the lesson: Not explicitly mentioned

Methods: Activation, motivation, brainstorming,

Forms: Individual work, pair work, whole-class work

Key competencies: Communication, problem solving, learning, cooperation

Aids: Student's book, Workbook, Exercise book, PC, television

Other comments: At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher exposed a new useful phrase and let the students guess what it means, which I find very motivating. What I also liked was how the teacher dealt with making mistakes. They emphasized a lot that making mistakes is good and they let the students find out what they did wrong. Through this, the pupils are learning to cope with their own mistakes. If pupils did not know what the mistake was, the teacher asked anybody else in the class to point it out and explain.

At the end of this lesson, pupils were asked to calm down, sit quietly, close their eyes and then, as in previous lesson, rate the lesson and then rate their activity and work during the lesson.

Appendix D: Observation sheet 3 (teaching practice 1)

Date: 12.3.2024

Class: 9.A

Theme of the lesson: Modal verbs might/should

Type of the lesson: Fixation and revision of the grammar

Aim of the lesson: "To practice the usage of might and should."

Methods: Activation, motivation, revision

Forms: Individual work, pair work, whole-class work

Key competencies: Communication, problem solving, learning, social and personal

Aids: Student's book, Workbook, PC, television

Other comments: The teacher started the lesson with tongue twisters - students were divided into pairs and each of them had to roll a dice and the number on the dice showed the number of times they had to read the tongue twister aloud. I find this a very good start of the lesson, because the students must be active, and they speak up.

Throughout the whole lesson, the teacher was very positive, and they tried to motivate the students, as they were quite passive and did not want to talk much.

Appendix E: Observation sheet 4 (teaching practice 1)

Date: 13.3.2024

Class: 6.B

Theme of the lesson: Time

Type of the lesson: Fixation and revision of telling the time

Aim of the lesson: "To practice telling the time."

Methods: Activation, motivation, revision

Forms: Individual work, whole-class work

Key competencies: Communication, problem solving, learning, social and personal

Aids: Student's book, Workbook, Exercise book, PC, television, paper clock

Other comments: I would like to appreciate the teacher's idea of fixation the time telling - she gave students homework to try to explain the time telling rules to someone at home. From my perspective, this is a very useful method as the students can learn a lot by teaching somebody else.

Another interesting game for the beginning of the lesson was Simon Says, as the pupils were able to practice their vocabulary, but they had little bit of a movement as well.

At the end of this lesson, pupils were asked to close their eyes and relax. Then, they had to put their thumbs up or down to signalize whether they enjoyed this lesson or not.

Appendix F: Observation sheet 5 (teaching practice 2)

Class: 6.C | Date: 4.11.2024 | Number of Ps in the class: 11

Coursebook used: Project 1 | Unit/lesson: 3D | Which lesson: 3rd

1.	Lesson planning *- timing* *- aims of the lesson (plan and reality)*	- timing was good, the teacher managed to fulfil the aim of the lesson - aim of the lesson was to write a short text about the school and the school schedule with a help of the course book
2.	Lesson management *- body language, voice* *- use of L1 and L2 by teacher/pupils* *- use of BB and other teaching aids*	- teacher used gestures, mimics; volume of her voice was adequate - teacher used combination of L1 and L2 for giving instructions - pupils used L2 for most of the lesson - teacher used PC, white board and projector
3.	Pupils' involvement *- pair/group work* *- discipline*	- whole class and individual work mostly - during one task, pupils were told to work in pairs when struggling
4.	Lesson content *- appropriacy, variety* *- use of textbook* *- real communication*	- content of the lesson was appropriate according to the aim - usage textbooks, exercises books and worksheets
5.	Classroom atmosphere *- trainee's relationship with Ps, encouragement of Ps and their collaboration* *- Ps' cooperation with the trainee*	- teacher's relationship with pupils was very friendly, since she is their class teacher - teacher was encouraging pupils all the time, mistakes were not seen as something bad - when some of the pupils did not an answer, teacher helped them or asked someone else
6.	Evaluation and feedback *- assessment/testing* *- setting and checking HW* *- handling errors, accuracy and fluency* *- providing feedback*	- there was no test, teacher only set a small HW - when someone mispronounced something, the teacher corrected them - in this lesson, the teacher did not give some kind of feedback
7.	Handling mixed ability classes *- flexibility to respond to different Ps*	- there were two pupils from Ukraine whose level of English is lower, so the teacher was asking them individually if they understood everything
8.	Command of language *- correctness of language structure, register* *- pronunciation*	- language was appropriate to level of pupils, pronunciation was perfect, register was more informal, as the teacher was very friendly with pupils
9.	Sensitivity to Ps' level of language *- instructions* *- appropriate modification to T talk*	- instructions were said in L1 and L2 to make sure that everybody understands - teacher adapted her language according to the level of pupils
10.	Any other relevant comments	I would like to appreciate the relationship of the teacher with the pupils. The teacher was very friendly, she was joking with them, which made very nice atmosphere and it benefited the calm and safe classroom environment.

Appendix G: Observation sheet 6 (teaching practice 2)

Class: 8.C | Date: 4.11.2024 | Number of Ps in the class: 10

Coursebook used: Project 2 | Unit/lesson: 4C | Which lesson: 5th

1.	Lesson planning *- timing* *- aims of the lesson (plan and reality)*	- timing of the lesson was fine - aim was not specifically mentioned, but the lesson was focused mostly on application of quantifiers
2.	Lesson management *- body language, voice* *- use of L1 and L2 by teacher/pupils* *- use of BB and other teaching aids*	- teacher used gestures, mimics; volume of her voice was adequate - teacher used combination of L1 and L2 for giving instructions, but L2 was used for most of the lesson - pupils used L2 for most of the lesson - teacher used PC, white board and projector, she even shown the test on the whiteboard
3.	Pupils' involvement *- pair/group work* *- discipline*	- individual work, whole class work, pair work – pupils were having an interview, the teacher was monitoring and even joined some conversations, which may indicate their interest in them - whole class work – the game "Find someone, who" – this is a game which includes both practicing language skills and movement
4.	Lesson content *- appropriacy, variety* *- use of textbook* *- real communication*	- content was appropriate and various – the teacher used course book and work sheets - pupils were practicing communication in pair work and in whole class work
5.	Classroom atmosphere *- trainee's relationship with Ps, encouragement of Ps and their collaboration* *- Ps' cooperation with the trainee*	- atmosphere during the lesson was very positive, as the teacher has friendly and kind relationship with pupils; she encouraged the pupils a lot and she gave space to everyone to speak, even to the pupils who are on lower level
6.	Evaluation and feedback *- assessment/testing* *- setting and checking HW* *- handling errors, accuracy and fluency* *- providing feedback*	- there was a test on practising quantifiers - teacher handled errors well and she corrected pronunciation as well; the fluency was not handled - teachers did not give feedback, but she praised the pupils a lot
7.	Handling mixed ability classes *- flexibility to respond to different Ps*	- in this class, there were two slow learners, the teacher did not treat them differently, but when they did not understand something, she used L1 to explain
8.	Command of language *- correctness of language structure, register* *- pronunciation*	- register was mostly informal, language was on adequate level
9.	Sensitivity to Ps' level of language *- instructions* *- appropriate modification to T talk*	- for saying instructions, teachers used L1 + L2 to make it clear
10.	Any other relevant comments	From my point of view, this lesson was good and very interactive. However, I would probably try to focus more on the fast learners, because there are two

		students who are on higher level than others, they are very fluent, so I would probably prepare more exercises for them. On the other hand, I understand it can be time consuming for the teacher to prepare it. Overall, I enjoyed a lot the observation and I would like to be a student in this class.

Appendix H: Observation sheet 7 (teaching practice 2)

Class: 6.C | Date: 6.11.2024 | Number of Ps in the class: 25

Coursebook used: Project 1 | Unit/lesson: 3D | Which lesson: 5th

1.	Lesson planning *- timing* *- aims of the lesson (plan and reality)*	- timing was great - aim of the lesson was not mentioned
2.	Lesson management *- body language, voice* *- use of L1 and L2 by teacher/pupils* *- use of BB and other teaching aids*	- teacher's body language was good, when somebody did not know some vocabulary, she tried to mime it for them; also, the teacher was going around the class and monitoring the pupils' activity - teacher used L1 + L2 when saying instructions - usage of textbook, worksheets, PC, whiteboard, projector
3.	Pupils' involvement *- pair/group work* *- discipline*	- in this lesson, pupils were working mostly in pairs and as a whole class - discipline was different, because the class was not divided into 2 groups as normally
4.	Lesson content *- appropriacy, variety* *- use of textbook* *- real communication*	- content of the lesson was appropriate, teacher prepared many different activities, so the textbook was not used much - the activities were various – they include practicing vocabulary and grammar, pupils were also able to communicate with their classmates and move around the class, as they play some games - real communication was done mostly in pair work
5.	Classroom atmosphere *- trainee's relationship with Ps, encouragement of Ps and their collaboration* *- Ps' cooperation with the trainee*	- relationship between the teacher and pupils was again very friendly, they tried to encourage them a lot, however, the whole class was there, so not everybody engaged equally - overall, most of the pupils were cooperating with the teacher
6.	Evaluation and feedback *- assessment/testing* *- setting and checking HW* *- handling errors, accuracy and fluency* *- providing feedback*	- HW was not checked because the first group was not given it yet - teacher handled errors well and they corrected pronunciation as well; the fluency was not handled - teacher was giving feedback – for example they told some of the students what they should focus on
7.	Handling mixed ability classes *- flexibility to respond to different Ps*	- when someone did not understand, the teacher asked someone else to explain it or say it in Czech
8.	Command of language *- correctness of language structure, register* *- pronunciation*	- mostly informal language, on appropriate level - pronunciation was good as well, teacher was talking at appropriate speed and pronounced words clearly

9.	Sensitivity to Ps' level of language - *instructions* - *appropriate modification to T talk*	- instructions were usually said in L1+L2, so everybody understands what they should do, as there were some students who are on lower level, so she tried to make everybody understand
10.	Any other relevant comments	