



C A P Í T U L O 5

THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHERS' WELLBEING AND POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AS KEY FACTORS IN QUALITY ENGLISH TEACHING

Diana Guadalupe De la Luz Castillo
ORCID: 0000-0002-8539-5317

Berenice Martínez Álvarez

Vilma Zoraida del Carmen Rodríguez Melchor
Universidad De Guadalajara

ABSTRACT: Covid pandemics and crisis contexts create psychologically challenging environments for teachers, who must adapt their strategies amid numerous uncertainties, as highlighted by UNESCO (2025). These crisis conditions are often characterized by political instability, poor public services, insecurity, and economic hardships, which affect countries classified as fragile states, including Mexico. Teachers there face additional personal, academic, cultural, and social challenges, compounded by overcrowded classrooms and insufficient technological resources. The situation places enormous pressure on their wellbeing. UNESCO and related research emphasize that teachers in crisis-affected contexts are not only educators but also serve as caretakers and counselors, taking on complex roles that increase their stress and risk of burnout. COVID-19 has intensified these stressors, impacting their motivation and ability to teach effectively. Teacher wellbeing is thus critical not only for educational quality but as a right in itself, calling for focused psychosocial support, professional development, and safe working conditions to help teachers flourish both inside and outside the classroom. The investigation involving English language teachers at Universidad de Guadalajara aims to diagnose their wellbeing and identify wellbeing practices amidst these demanding conditions to enhance their academic practices and class quality. This approach aligns with global efforts to standardize and contextualize teacher wellbeing policies to better support educators in crisis situations, as recommended by UNESCO and the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) toolkit findings.

KEYWORDS: Teacher wellbeing, crisis contexts, COVID-19 pandemic, Psychosocial support, Professional development.

RESUMEN: Las pandemias de Covid y los contextos de crisis generan entornos psicológicamente desafiantes para los docentes, quienes deben adaptar sus estrategias ante numerosas incertidumbres, tal como destaca la UNESCO (2025). Estas condiciones de crisis suelen caracterizarse por inestabilidad política, servicios públicos deficientes, inseguridad y dificultades económicas, afectando a países considerados estados frágiles, entre ellos México. Los docentes enfrentan además desafíos personales, académicos, culturales y sociales, agravados por aulas saturadas y falta de recursos tecnológicos adecuados. Esta situación ejerce una gran presión sobre su bienestar. La UNESCO y diversas investigaciones subrayan que los docentes en contextos de crisis no solo son educadores, sino también cuidadores y consejeros, desempeñando roles complejos que incrementan su estrés y riesgo de agotamiento profesional. La pandemia de Covid-19 ha intensificado estos factores estresantes, afectando su motivación y capacidad para enseñar eficazmente. Por ello, el bienestar docente es crucial no solo para la calidad educativa, sino como un derecho en sí mismo, requiriendo apoyo psicosocial, desarrollo profesional y condiciones laborales seguras que permitan a los educadores prosperar tanto dentro como fuera del aula. La investigación con docentes de inglés en la Universidad de Guadalajara tiene como objetivo diagnosticar su bienestar y detectar prácticas relacionadas con el mismo en medio de estas exigentes condiciones, para mejorar sus prácticas académicas y la calidad de sus clases. Este enfoque se alinea con esfuerzos globales para estandarizar y contextualizar políticas de bienestar docente que apoyen mejor a los educadores en situaciones de crisis, tal como recomienda la UNESCO y el manual de la Red Interagencial para la Educación en Emergencias (INEE).

PALABRAS CLAVE: Bienestar docente, contextos de crisis, pandemia de COVID-19, apoyo psicosocial, desarrollo profesional.

INTRODUCTION

Covid Pandemics and other crisis context have resulted in risky scenarios for teachers to work in psychologically healthy conditions. They have to adapt their strategies and knowledge to the new classroom characteristics with tons of unknown tasks, challenges and threats, as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization highlights (UNESCO, 2025). Worldwide speaking, UNESCO also explains the features of crisis context by considering fragile states; places where there is political instability, poor public services, economic uncertainty, poor security, need of shelter, nutrition and protection. Mexico is not far away from that setting, and teachers at schools face not only such problems, but also personal issues and academic ones related to the cultural, economic, social, psychological and neurodivergent differences among students. Following up an endless syllabus plus facing day-to-day routines under underprivileged conditions where classrooms

are overcrowded and not well technologically equipped are some of the daily matters that educations tackle beside commuting and traffic bottlenecks. The main purpose of this paper is to give a general scope of what wellbeing and the Positive Psychology are, and to share the design of an investigation where English language teachers (ELT) at Universidad de Guadalajara are considered in order to diagnose their wellbeing teaching conditions when carrying out everyday labors as well as to point out some wellbeing practices they may or may not have with the goal of improving their academic practices and the quality in their classes.

CONTEXT

Universidad de Guadalajara (UDG) is a public school with more than 300,000 students (UDG, Numeralia, 2025). It has 17 campuses around the State of Jalisco. Three such sites are Centro Universitario de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades (CUCSH) with more than 12000 students, Centro Universitario de Tonalá (CUTONALA) with more than 9400 students and Centro Universitario de la Costa (CUCOSTA) with more than 7000 students. At this point, all of them offer English classes for students at pre-grade programs such as Law, History, Social Work, Philosophy, Political Studies, Architecture, Video Games Design, Engineering, Economics, Medicine, among others. English classes take place under different conditions and settings: virtual and face-to-face classes, synchronously and asynchronously. Different schedules are covered by teachers: morning shift, afternoon shift, and weekend shift. English teachers face different types of challenges: students who do not eat anything at all before classes, shy, impatient, mischief and disrespectful ones, lack of equipment, long-distance commuting, among others. English teachers regularly attend more than 6 groups a week (teaching 3-6 hours a week each group). Evaluating and teaching such groups become a nightmare every semester.

JUSTIFICATION

Some practices from English teachers are routinary and they depend on how the teacher feels and performs in class. Under that scope, Positive Psychology and The Science of Wellbeing are to innovative options to cope with the issue of having language teachers demotivated and unsatisfied with their job. The impact of this research is on the students of language teachers of 3 sites at UDG where more than 23000 students take pre-grade programs. Those 23,000 can receive the benefit of teachers who know more about wellbeing and how to implement it in the classes. That is why the main objective of this research should be considered since it takes into account the present status of teachers withing their feelings of wellbeing and satisfaction at work by the application of a wellbeing diagnostic questionnaires and an interview about aptitudes and attitudes performed in classes towards wellbeing.

OBJECTIVES

General Objective:

To create a social consciousness of the importance of wellbeing at work among English language teachers (ELT) to improve their wellbeing and their teaching.

Specific Objectives:

- a. To know how Positive Psychology and the Wellbeing Science can contribute to improve English language teachers' practice.
- b. To promote psychological health and wellbeing among ELT through the promotion of Positive Psychology and the Science of Wellbeing as an ELT training.
- c. To describe the present practices of English language teachers (ELT) within wellbeing in their lives and in their classes for them to improve both.

HYPOTHESIS

If English language teachers (ELT) at UDG are aware of different practices of Positive Psychology and Wellbeing, they can take the decision on how to improve their wellbeing and improve their classes respectively

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Positive Psychology is a science and a subdivision of psychology that emphasizes the study of the aspects that contribute to human booming and well-being. It demands a shift in the focus from solely addressing mental illness to shape positive qualities and fortify overall well-being under scientific basis. As mentioned, it addresses strengths and virtues, wellbeing, practical applications and scientific approaches from psychological intervention (Sellingman, 2000). According to Sellingman (2000), happiness can be learned and practiced, and it helps people find career success and personal achievement. Sellingman proposes a model of 5 factors in order to impulse levels of satisfaction. Those factors are: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and purpose and accomplishment (Villanueva, 2020).

Sellingman pointed out those related to peace, gratitude, inspirations, love and hope as an example of positive emotions (Villanueva, 2020). People can experience inner peace through various practices and approaches, including mindfulness techniques such as meditation and breathing exercises, cultivating a positive mindset, and focusing on self-care and self-compassion. Moreover, practices like understanding, empathy, sympathy, forgiveness, clemency with people and animals and engaging

with nature can contribute to a sense of peace (Lindhard, 2017). Engagement can be experienced when people move towards aspects, actions, issues and people they matter: oneself, likes, relationships, among others (Ashworth, 2020). Traveling, for example, can be an engaging activity as well as feeling progress, recognition and success at work. Additionally, engagement is felt when doing tasks, one is good at, when learning a new ability and when celebrating achievement. To keep motivated in life, Ashworth recommends prioritizing activities, conversations and people that make one feel good sharing gratitude with such individuals around one because saying *thank you* recharges people's energies. It is significant to be strict about who one's close friends are. It is always important to take care about not draining energy with negative people around. Acknowledging joy is another task to engage people by mentioning, writing down, journaling or simply visualizing all the things and actions that make one feel joy. Furthermore, when considering giving time to others, people should also take into account specific time for themselves. Sharing time with others is beneficial, but it is much more worthwhile to assign some time for oneself doing something one really enjoys doing. While being with oneself is valuable, keeping nice, empathetic, trustful, loyal, reliable, cordial, respectful, trouble-free and diplomatic relationships with others is as recommendable as possible to engage in life.

Meaning, purpose and accomplishment are three aspects that can be seen from different perspectives, but can be engaged with the same activities people do every day. According to Sellingman (2000) and his Positive Psychology, meaning and purpose are reached when people have a sense of belonging to and a sense of reaching something that is bigger than themselves. For instance, teachers can recognize the purpose of working at school, how good it feels to succeed at work and to satisfy the specific needs of students that are under their care. Indeed, that can give a meaning to teachers' work. But accomplishment is more in the sense of how much one person grows in a place. Meaning in life means being coherent and organizing oneself to succeed. That is to say, to live according to what one believes and the purposes that are pursued (Shin and Steger, 2014). Therefore, when reflecting about meaning, purpose and accomplishment, there should be taken into account some other aspects such as satisfaction, pleasure, fulfilment or achievement, comfort, relief and wellbeing.

THE WELLBEING SCIENCE: HISTORY AND PRESENT PRACTICES

The Science of Wellbeing has been described also as a life philosophy. Some authors have described it as a subjective science of pursuing happiness (Diener, 2009). In the Ancient Greece, many philosophers wonder about what a good life was. Some others always wondered about what was desirable in life. This fact of

asking about the meaning and the importance of issues that are good, pleasant or satisfactory in life is called subjective wellbeing. Virtue, pleasure and happiness could be mistaken as hedonism or stoicism (Diener, 2009). Happiness, in this context of subjective wellbeing, is seen as the *highest good*. Many research papers emerged in the middle of the Twentieth Century, but those were meant to discover how many people and how much they were happy (Gallup, 1976). Even, in the 60 's some investigators created a scale of happiness; for instance, Bradburn (1969) developed a scale to measure emotional well-being. Some significant information from the research carried out during that time revealed that happiness was associated to social status, age, family structure and sex, race, education and income, among others. Indicators of life satisfaction were analyzed and it was found that some indicators of mental health affected happiness and wellbeing such as anxiety and stress. Surprisingly, these old studies discovered that the positive affect and feelings around wellbeing were born from social participation rather than income, family structure, education or race, for example. Among the activities associated to positive affect there are: meeting new people, having social participation or membership in charitable organizations, getting new friends, joining friends and getting in touch with relatives.

The Science of Wellbeing is based on savoring the good issues in life. The main focus is on what makes people happy. It emphasizes that money and material things are temporary happiness (Johnson, 2025). The main point is to find what people are good at and find places where to work and develop such skills or find the areas of opportunity to develop the skills that seem to be weak. Practicing gratitude and improving the areas of opportunity in people 's life also bring happiness to life. Besides, people should also practice being kind and know how to establish objectives efficiently with a target, an outcome, visualizing problems and planning solutions. The Science of Wellbeing is based on setting and following upright habits. Geffen (2023) highlights the importance of self-discovery. This science is committed with neurosciences and the knowledge from genetics and psychology too. Geffen empathizes the importance of gratitude, mindfulness, and social connections. He states that the main focus should be places in fostering exercise, sleep, and diet or healthy food. The objective is to keep a mind and a body as healthy as possible.

METHODOLOGY

- a. Type of research. This research is meant to be qualitative investigation to describe how teachers experience or not their wellbeing and how they can improve it. It is also a study to determine how well they practice wellbeing principles in their lives and classes in order to make them conscious of such practices.

- b. Subjects: More than 70 English teachers teaching at CUCSH, CUTONALA and CUCOSTA:
- c. Instruments: a wellbeing diagnostic questionnaire about personal practice and wellbeing and a questionnaire about aptitudes and attitudes performed in classes towards wellbeing adopted from De la Luz (2020) (See Appendix 1 and 2). The instruments will be applied in Spanish since most of the teachers have Spanish as there first language (L1)
- d. Chronogram:
 - Design of the research: June 2025.
 - Diffusion of the protocol: July, 2025.
 - Design or adaptation of instruments: June, 2025
 - Application of Instruments: September, 2025.
 - Data Analysis: November
 - Results and Conclusions: December, 2025
 - Diffusion of results: 2026.

APPENDIXES

1. Self-assessment: personal practices to promote well-being in teachers.

Mark your choice with an (x).

Activity	Always	Almost always	Almost never	Never
I sleep 7-8 hours.				
I eat breakfast and dinner on time.				
I have fruit and vegetables to eat as snacks between meals.				
I have fruit and vegetables to eat as snacks between meals.				
I take a moment each day to rest, especially when my workday is long.				
I exercise daily for at least 30 minutes.				
I spend time with colleagues who share my concerns and provide me with constructive feedback about myself and my work.				
I enjoy one or more hobbies throughout the week.				
I get up on time every day.				
I go to work with my materials organized and planned.				

I keep a planner that shows me day by day the commitments and activities to be done.				
I fulfill scheduled commitments on time and properly.				
I enjoy places or activities that relax me and fill me with tranquility.				
I acknowledge my achievements with myself every day.				
I recognize my achievements in front of others.				
Every day I recognize at least one of my personal attributes, whether intellectual, physical, social, talents, etc				

2. Assessment of teacher attitudes and skills to promote well-being in the classroom.

Mark your choice with an (x).

Activity	Always	Almost always	Almost never	Never
I keep an initial assessment of what my students like to do, eat, listen to, visit, or watch in programs, hobbies, etc., and I take it into account during the course to motivate them.				
2. I start the class with an activity that involves movement and some effort to recall vocabulary, a topic, or something previously seen or known.				
3. I use a firm but friendly tone of voice throughout the class.				
4. I change the tone of my voice during the class to engage students in an activity.				
5. I monitor or supervise the students' work when they are working individually, in pairs, or in teams so that they can express their doubts to me.				
6. I keep a board organized with "key" elements that guide the students throughout the class.				
7. I present one topic per class and during the first 20 minutes of each lesson.				
8. I ask students who appear confident to participate, without trying to expose those who seem nervous.				

9. I appreciate the effort of students who showed anxiety or nervousness during their participation in class.				
10. I keep track of situations, activities, topics, or moments that cause them distress, stress, anxiety, or discomfort in their daily life.				
11. The homework I assign in class tries to be simple and manageable for the students.				
12. I start the class by asking how my students feel or what types of activities they have done or enjoy.				
13. I break the ice at the beginning of my classes by sharing some information about my activities, tastes, and personal experiences before starting class.				
14. I make a daily assessment of the group's mood before starting the class.				
15. I begin with activities that include movement, stretching, companionship, competition, and motivation among the students during the first 5 minutes.				
16. I implement activities that go from less challenging to more challenging throughout the class.				
17. I maintain eye contact with all my students without intimidating them.				
18. I try to ensure that all students participate equally (those on the sides, in front, passive, active, and in the center of the classroom).				
19. I use a kind and friendly tone of voice.				
20. I am clear and firm in my decisions and responses toward students without hurting their feelings.				
21. I implement team work and pair work in a varied manner during the same class.				
22. I respect students' comments without mocking their opinions.				
23. I thank students for their participation when I request it and they provide it.				
24. I acknowledge students' correct contributions with kind phrases or gestures.				
25. I give clear instructions about what each student should do in the activities.				
26. I review instructions so that all students know what each activity is about.				

27. I summarize the class so that everyone reviews any concept, structure, or vocabulary they did not grasp during the lesson.				
28. I implement activities where students recognize the skills and talents of their classmates.				
29. I implement activities where students recall memorable moments, places, or activities.				
30. I repeat dynamics and educational games that the group enjoys.				
31. I implement activities where all students can participate, regardless of their condition, race, color, preference, disability, gender, religion, belief, etc. Implemento actividades donde todos los estudiantes puedan participar, no importando su condición, raza, color, preferencia, incapacidad, género, religión, creencia, etc.				
32. I try not to make racist or discriminatory comments toward the students. Trato de no hacer comentarios racistas o discriminatorios hacia los estudiantes.				
33. I celebrate students' achievements in a credible way.				
34. I design attractive materials that do not promote any type of discrimination and therefore include a variety of topics and possibilities: size of materials for visually impaired students, colorful for visual learners, varied considering cultural, religious diversity, etc.				
35. I avoid sarcastic comments: both mine and among students.				
36. I build an environment of interaction and acceptance among students and toward the teacher.				

REFERENCES

Ashworth, A. (2020). *How to engage fully in life*. Retrieved June 11th, 2025, from: <https://www.roadtogrowthcounseling.com/how-to-engage-fully-in-your-life/>

Brandburn, N. (1969). *The Structure of Psychological Wellbeing*. Retrieved June 11th, 2025, from: https://www.norc.org/content/dam/norc-org/pdfs/BradburnN_Struc_Psych_Well_Being.pdf

De la Luz, D. (2020). *Una nueva balanza e identidad en la formación de docente de idiomas: propuesta para reducción de estrés y ansiedad, incremento de bienestar e inclusión de emociones en el aula*. En Roriguez, V. y Scartascini, G. (2020). México en el mundo: Identidad. Inclusión. Interculturalidad. Universidad de Guadalajara, México.

Diener, E. (2009). *Subjective Well-Being*. Retrieved June 11th, 2025, from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/00812463090390>

Gallup, M. (1976). *Human Needs and Satisfaction*. Retrieved June 11th, 2025, from: <https://academic.oup.com/poq/article-abstract/40/4/459/1872209?redirectedFrom=PDF>

Geffen, M. (2023). *The Science of Happiness and Well-Being: "Unlocking the Power of Resilience for Optimal Joy and Health"*. Retrieved June 11th, 2025, from: <https://Science-Happiness-Well-Being-Unlocking-Resilience-ebook/dp/B0BZB2VQVY>

Johnson, A. (2025). *Seven Lesson from Yale´s Happiness Course*. Retrieved June 11th, 2025, from: <https://www.acuitymag.com/people/seven-lessons-from-yales-The-Science-of-well-Being-course/>

Lindhard, T. (2017). *Experiencing Peace Through Heart-Based Meditation on The Self*. Retrieved June 11th, 2025, from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316490552_Experiencing_Peace_Through_Heart-Based_Meditation_on_The_Self

Sellingman, M. (2000). *Positive Psychology: an introduction*. Retrieved June 11th, 2025, from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/11946304_Positive_Psychology_An_Introduction

Shin, J. and Steger, M. (2014). *Promoting Meaning and Purpose in Life*. Retrieved June 11th, 2025, from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277692354_Promoting_Meaning_and_Purpose_in_Life

UDG (2025). *Numeralia Institucional UDG*. Retrieved June 11th, 2025, from: <https://cgpe.udg.mx/sites/default/files/Numeralia/30%20de%20abril%202025.pdf>

UNESCO (2025). *Teacher wellbeing and the shaping of teacher shortages in crisis-affected contexts*. Retrieved June 11th, 2025, from: https://teachertaskforce.org/sites/default/files/2025-01/TTF_Teacher%20wellbeing%20and%20the%20shaping%20of%20teacher%20shortages%20in%20crisis-affected%20contexts_Jan25.pdf

Villanueva, A. (2020). *What makes you happy. Sellingman, father of Positive Psychology*. Retrieved June 11th, 2025, from: <https://conecta.tec.mx/en/news/national/health/what-makes-you-happy-martin-seligman-father-positive-psychology>