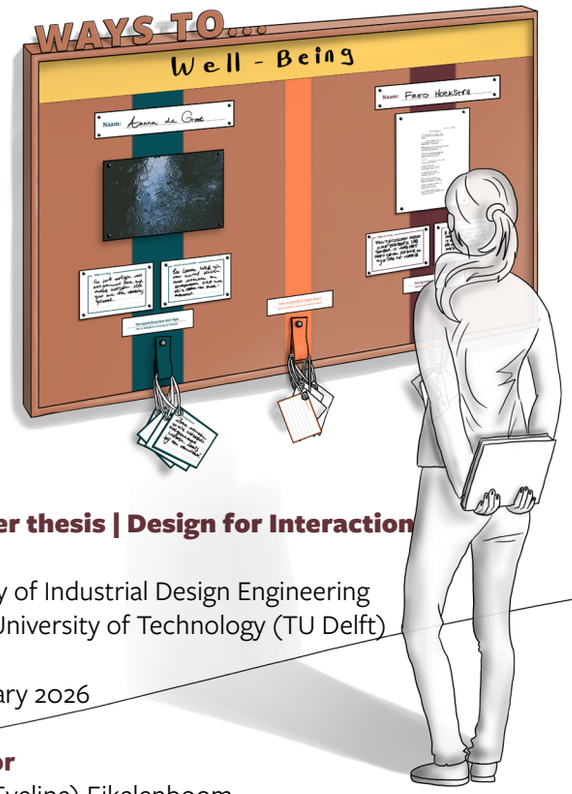
Teachers as role models for youth well-being



How modelling resilience, identity and interaction could enhance well-being amongst secondary school students

Eefje Eikelenboom

Master Thesis | Design for Interaction | Delft University of Technology



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Delft University of Technology (TU Delft)

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Author
E. C. (Eveline) Eikelenboom

Graduation Committee

Dr. ir. J. I. J. C. (Jotte) de Koning	Chair
Dr. R. A. (Rebecca) Price	Mentor

In collaboration with
Healthy Start, Convergence
A collaboration between Erasmus University Rotterdam, Delft University of Technology and Erasmus Medical Centre.

Dr. Y. J. (Yara) Toenders	Client and researcher at Healthy Start
Ir. R. (Robin) Smits	Client and researcher at Healthy Start



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Enjoy reading!

Eefje

ABSTRACT

Youth well-being is declining, driven by rising stress and pressure, increasing expectations, and a lack of role models who demonstrate how to foster resilience (Dopmeijer et al., 2023; GGD GHOR Nederland et al., 2024). Well-being complaints seem to appear and intensify in the secondary school context (Borg et al., 2024). At puberty in particular, insecurities kick in, and youth seek a sense of identity, purpose, and meaning (Green et al., 2022; Strating et al., 2024). Youth can learn skills, norms, and identity from role models such as family, friends and teachers, fostering their well-being (Dopmeijer et al., 2023; Kearney et al., 2020). Role models could further enhance youth well-being by modelling behaviour and behavioural norms, and by representing what is possible or inspiring them to pursue certain goals (Morgenroth et al., 2015). Schools play a significant role in daily life and are well-positioned to support well-being from an early age, and teachers could be important role models for students (Dopmeijer et al., 2023; Kearney et al., 2020; Peeters et al., 2022). However, teachers often do not know exactly what role modelling means, and why it is beneficial; role modelling should therefore be made more explicit and intentional for them (Sanderse, 2012).

For a teacher to be a role model for well-being, three key components have been identified: resilience, identity, and interaction. Showing resilience could help students find ways to deal with stress and worry, be vulnerable, adopt a helpful mindset and shift norms. Showing identity could help students find purpose and meaning and build confidence. Showing interaction could set behavioural norms and foster connections. To intentionally showcase resilience, identity, or interactions, a teacher must first reflect on how they have personally experienced these themes in the past. Then, to make them explicit, the teacher could share them with their students. To assist the teacher in navigating this process in a structured, purposeful manner, the design goal was to create a tool that intentionally and explicitly showcases their unique resilience, identity, and/or interactions, so the teacher can serve as a behavioural model, represent the possible, or inspire their students.

Therefore, Ways to Well-Being has been developed. Ways to Well-Being guides teachers through the following steps:

1. Becoming aware of what role modelling is and can do.
2. Reflecting on their own ‘ways to well-being’ to make them more intentional and explicit.
3. Making these ‘ways’ visible to students, showing why the ‘ways’ matter, and opening up conversations.
4. Showing how students can copy these ‘ways’ to use for themselves.

The tool has been evaluated with over 30 teachers and 30 students, resulting in many insights. Students value seeing more of their teachers’ lives and personalities, and teachers like the ability to show their human side. Although vulnerability can become a barrier for some teachers, it also fosters empathy from students towards teachers, and can help students feel related to their teachers and less alone when they experience something similar. Overall, this points to great potential for a teacher to serve as a role model to support youth well-being through resilience, identity and interaction.



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LIST OF DEFINITIONS

**In-depth explanation and origin of the definition will be provided further in the report. The short definition is provided here to give initial guidance.*

Adolescents

Youth within the ages of 10 to 24 (Sawyer et al., 2018).

Mentor

A mentor in the Dutch school context is a subject teacher who is also assigned to a class and guides those students in their personal development. The mentor monitors students' well-being and progress and serves as the primary point of contact for students and parents regarding school matters.

Resilience

'The ability to be happy, successful, etc. again after something difficult or bad has happened' (Cambridge University Press, 2026).

Role

'The position or purpose that someone or something has in a situation, organization, society, or relationship' (Cambridge University Press, 2025b).

Role Model*

'A person whom someone admires and whose behaviour they try to copy' (Cambridge University Press, 2025a).

Secondary School

Secondary school refers to the Dutch *middelbare school*: the stage of education after primary school (typically starting around age 12) where students follow a multi-year programme leading to different diploma routes that prepare them for vocational training or higher education.

Students

Students is used to refer to pupils in Dutch secondary schools (age 12~18).

Type of education

Type of education refers to the main Dutch secondary school tracks: vmbo (pre-vocational), havo (general secondary, preparing for universities of applied sciences), and vwo (pre-university, preparing for research universities). These tracks differ in duration and level, and they shape students' curricula and progression routes.

Well-being

'The state of feeling healthy and happy' (Cambridge University Press & Assessment, 2026).

Youth

Used as a smaller term than adolescents, to describe young people in the age group of when they go to secondary school (12~18).



1. INTRODUCTION

The state of youth well-being is cause for concern. Research indicates that adolescence is a vulnerable period for the development of mental health issues, and various indicators of youth well-being have been worsening in recent years, both internationally and in the Netherlands. According to the World Health Organisation (2025a), globally, 14.7% of 10–19-year-olds experience a mental disorder. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for 15–29-year-old females, the third for males, and accounts for 8% of all deaths in this age group (World Health Organisation, 2025b). Furthermore, adolescents in secondary schools nowadays report higher levels of depressive symptoms and social anxiety than twenty years ago (Borg et al., 2024).

Although the Netherlands does relatively well in international comparisons, the national numbers remain concerning (Stevens et al., 2024). According to Gagliardi (2025), over half of Dutch young adults aged 16–25 experience mental health problems. In 2024, only half of the youth in this age group considered their mental health to be good, while 35% rated it as moderate and 14% as (very) poor. On top of that, 43% felt (very) often stressed, and 56% regularly experienced performance pressure (RIVM, GGD GHOR Nederland, & CBS, 2025).

These concerns may already be visible earlier in adolescence. Stevens et al. (2024) compared psychosomatic complaints and life satisfaction among Dutch 11–15-year-olds between 2009/2010 and 2021/2022. Psychosomatic complaints have been increasing over the years, while life satisfaction has decreased. This is empasised by the Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu (RIVM) and Gemeentelijke Gezondheidsdienst (GGD). They monitor the health, well-being, and lifestyle of youth in secondary schools. In 2023, 50% felt (very) often stressed (GGD GHOR Nederland & RIVM, 2024). Furthermore, their study shows that 37% of girls, 17% of boys, and 63% of students with other gender identities experienced psychological issues. Among youth, 4% feel unable to turn to anyone for help with their problems. Lastly, 4% reported having often or very often seriously considered ending their life in the past twelve months, which is one person in every class of 25 students.

These developments highlight the need to improve well-being, and point to secondary school as a particularly relevant period to focus on, as complaints appear to emerge in this context, and intensify over time (Borg et al., 2024). Furthermore, stress about school is one of the biggest increasing issues for youth (RIVM, 2025). There is more and more pressure to perform well, get homework done in time, and balance school with other things in life like work, sports and social media (RIVM, 2023; Stevens et al., 2024). On top of that, during puberty, insecurities kick in, and comparisons are everywhere (Green et al., 2022; Strating et al., 2024). Youth are trying to discover their identity and purpose in this world and seek a sense of belonging (Green et al., 2022).

Role models can have a significant impact in shaping this identity, purpose, skills, and expectations in years of crucial development (Dopmeijer et al., 2023; Gibson, 2003). Youth have several people around them who act as role models, such as parents, friends, influencers, and teachers (Dopmeijer et al., 2023; Kearney et al., 2020). Although family is a significant support factor for youth well-being, research indicates that family relationships are already in a generally positive state (Van Der Burg et al., 2022). Furthermore, adolescence is a stage in life when social focus shifts from family to outside influences, providing a rationale for redirecting the attention in policymaking and solution design as well (Green et al., 2022; Peeters et al., 2022; Steinberg & Morris, 2001).

Within the context of secondary school, teachers can have a significant impact as role models, and could play a vital role in students' well-being (Kearney et al., 2020; Peeters et al., 2022). Firstly, teachers have frequent contact with students and may be able to signal problematic behaviour, well-being issues, or extensive levels of stress (Peeters et al., 2022). Secondly, in Dutch secondary schools, most teachers also act as mentors, guiding students in their career choices and personal development. In this role, they can open conversations with students about their well-being, purpose, identity and self-confidence. Thirdly, teachers model certain behavioural norms to the class and correct students constructively on their behaviour (Da Silva Pinho et al., 2025). They can show how to manage setbacks and maintain a positive attitude, helping students flourish and feel happy (GGD GHOR Nederland et al., 2024; Peeters et al., 2022). By introducing and supporting teachers as role models in schools, resilience and identity could potentially be strengthened, healthy norms and expectations could be established, and skills could be developed (Dopmeijer et al., 2023).

This thesis explores the potential of secondary school teachers as role models for youth well-being. We will first delve deeper into the theoretical background: the causes of declining well-being among youth, the school's role in this, and the possibility of role models as a support factor. These theories will then be supplemented with insights from empirical research with teachers and youth at Dutch secondary schools, resulting in a clearer understanding of role modelling in this context. A design direction will be defined, and solutions will be created to support teachers in serving as role models for youth well-being. These solutions will be evaluated with teachers and youth to develop and refine a final concept. The concept will be presented, merging the insights from the research. Lastly, recommendations and a discussion will be provided.

About Healthy Start

The research is an initiative of Healthy Start, which is a part of the Convergence Alliance, a collaboration between TU Delft, Erasmus University Rotterdam and Erasmus MC. The Convergence alliance is a collaboration between researchers and aims to strengthen the bonds between disciplines such as industrial design engineering, social, behavioural, and societal sciences, and paediatrics (Crone et al., 2022).

Healthy Start is a research program within Convergence that aims to provide young adults with equal opportunities to shape their early lives. They conduct multidisciplinary research and co-create strategies in collaboration with partners and youth. One of their research themes is improving youth well-being. Rather than focusing on 'mental health problems', the aim of Healthy Start is to shift the focus to the positive side of well-being: fostering resilience. Through their research, Healthy Start aims to understand the prerequisites for youth to flourish, through involving them in their research (Convergence, 2025; Toenders et al., 2025).

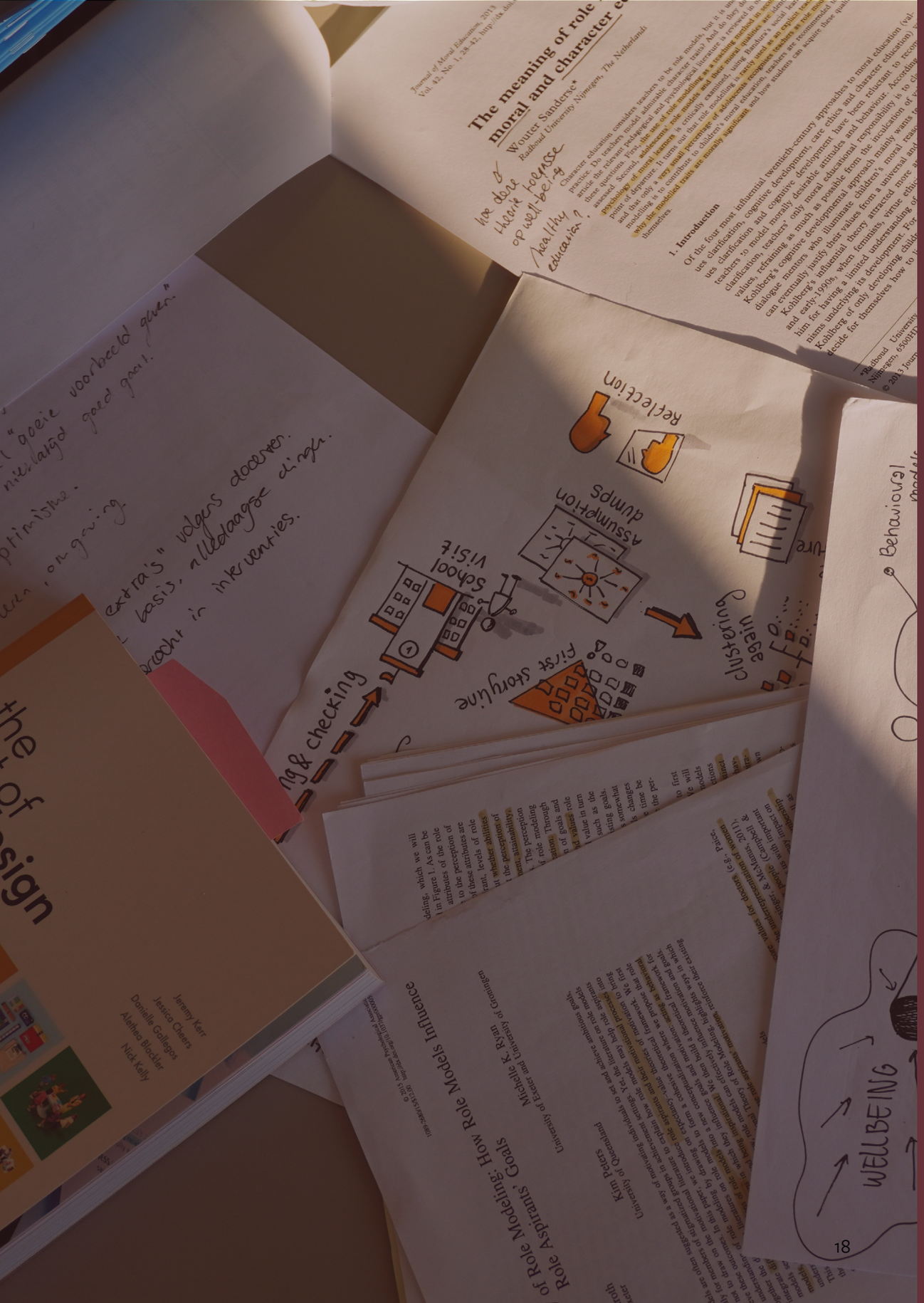
In one of Healthy Start's participatory research projects, the youth identified that they would prefer to learn about well-being in secondary school. Healthy Start is discovering, among other things, which school-based initiatives are beneficial for youth well-being, and what makes them effective. They want to discover the role the teacher plays in fostering students' resilience, as well as the influence role models can have (Convergence, 2025).

Healthy Start is conducting this research to inform its partners, including Trimbos Institute, MIND US, Nederlands Jeugdinstituut, municipalities and schools (Convergence, 2025). With their research findings, they want to contribute to the development of intervention and prevention approaches and strategies of change. With a strong scientific basis, policymakers, partners and schools can make better-informed decisions about implementing well-being interventions and strategies (Toenders et al., 2025).

About well-being

Awareness of mental health is growing, and while this helps break taboos and increase understanding, it could also lead to negative side effects (Foulkes & Andrews, 2023). Foulkes and Andrews suggest that recognising potential distress might cause mild symptoms to worsen through self-fulfilling effects, which then increase reported symptoms and sustain a vicious cycle. In other words, stress, pressure, or feeling down are normal parts of life, and not all levels of stress are harmful or cause concern. This emphasises the importance of adopting the right mindset when designing and implementing well-being interventions or strategies: increasing the positive aspects of 'mental health'—fostering well-being and resilience—instead of solving mental health 'issues'. Although schools and teachers are well-placed to identify problematic behaviour and underlying issues, this will therefore not be the focus of the project (Peeters et al., 2022).





2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

What

This chapter will explore the factors influencing the decline in youth well-being. It provides context for the project by exploring the origins of role modelling and discussing its potential in education and teaching, through a review of literature, statistics, reports, podcasts, and videos. Several papers and fact sheets on adolescent well-being, especially in the Netherlands, were examined. Theories on role modelling were explored through papers on sociological and psychological constructs of roles, modelling, role models, and behaviour.

For whom

This chapter is especially relevant for anyone unfamiliar with the current state of youth well-being and curious about what 'well-being' actually means. It is particularly interesting for teachers to understand their role model functions, and stakeholders interested in the role model constructs.

2.1 FACTORS INFLUENCING WELL-BEING

To measure youth well-being in the Netherlands, Green et al. (2022) developed an assessment tool: the Multidimensional Well-being in Youth Scale. To develop this tool, they examined the factors that Dutch adolescents and young adults consider important for their well-being (n=339), co-evaluated these factors (n=25), and tested them again in a new sample (n=239). This resulted in five main components, which together determine the well-being of today's Dutch youth:

1. Impact, purpose, meaning
2. Dealing with stress and worry
3. Family relationships
4. Self-confidence
5. Feeling respected, appreciated, and loved

Although all these components influence youth well-being, are interrelated, and should be considered relevant, Green et al. (2022) suggest focusing on components 1, 2, and 5 when designing interventions to promote well-being. These are the most needed today, according to the youth, and solutions in these areas often fail to meet their needs.

Dealing with stress

When considering other studies, it seems that component 2, 'dealing with stress and worry', is particularly influencing the current negative trends in well-being. Recent studies show that declining well-being is caused by stress, which is, in turn, increased by school pressure, pressure to perform, full agendas, social media, and unstable home situations (GGD GHOR Nederland et al., 2024; Strating et al., 2024). Students mention finding it hard to destress or being unable to destress at all, and having difficulty putting things into perspective, such as school achievements, social relationships, and appearance. They have trouble permitting themselves to do nothing (GGD GHOR Nederland et al., 2024).

School as the main cause of stress

Stress and pressure are interrelated; both are increasing, and secondary school seems to play a big part in this (GGD GHOR Nederland et al., 2024; Stichting KidsRights, 2025). There is increasing pressure to perform well in school, get homework done on time, and balance school with other aspects of life, such as work, sports, and social media (RIVM, 2025; Strating et al., 2024). This is all happening while they must find their way into adulthood in a social environment where people judge, bully, and try to belong (Strating et al., 2024).

The pressure that youth feel because of schoolwork has been increasing quite strongly over the last years, with 14% of boys and 19% of girls noting that they experienced '(quite) a lot of pressure' in 2009/10, compared to 32% of boys and 45% of girls in 2021/22 (Stevens et al., 2024). In 2023, almost half of Dutch youth aged 12 to 16 experienced (quite) a lot of pressure because of schoolwork (Rombouts et al., 2024). In 2025, 61% of Dutch youth (ages 12-29) reported feeling pressured to perform regularly or often (State of Youth NL et al., 2025). From these people, the biggest group feels this pressure is strongest when they 'are busy with school' (47%), followed by 'thinking of future plans' (21%). Among youth, 68% consider themselves the main influence on this pressure to perform, and 40% indicate that school/study and teachers also influence them. The experienced pressure is higher among girls than among boys and increases with age. The pressure is highest at Havo and VWO levels (Rombouts et al., 2024).

Exams, homework and high expectations from school

Students in Dutch secondary schools mainly experience this pressure due to the emphasis on grading, exams, deadlines, exam weeks, and homework (Vermeulen et al., 2021). This is emphasized by Dutch youth in the study by State of Youth NL et al. (2025), who mention the main reasons for performance pressure in secondary school to be that 'teachers plan too much exams, deadlines and homework' (55%), 'school and teachers set too high expectations' (53%), 'school and teachers put the emphasis on high performing' (37%), and 'school and teachers only look to grades and not the individual situation'(27%). At the same time, positive academic achievements have been linked to positive student well-being (Morinaj & Hascher, 2022).

CONFIRMATION FROM THE FIELD

'I had boys and girls aged 17/18 who had panic attacks the day before they went to school, due to the stress of wanting to do so well in their exams...'

– Hannah, former student counsellor

High expectations from society

However, recent evidence suggests that the rise in perceived school pressure among Dutch adolescents cannot be explained solely by increased schoolwork or harder exams. In a study commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, students indeed mention tests, grades and homework as important sources of pressure, but schools and parents primarily point to broader societal and parental expectations (and a more performance-oriented culture) as underlying drivers. Expectations outside of school are increasing, including those from parents, sports, social life, social media, and side jobs. Students face more responsibilities, must meet numerous standards, and need to divide their attention in multiple directions (Vermeulen et al., 2021).

The social system in the Netherlands generally regards 'being busy' as a status symbol, leading to a social norm of engaging in many activities (Bellezza et al., 2016; Braak, 2023). Additionally, there is a social expectation among youth to always stay connected and reachable on online (social) media (Van

Der Meijs, 2025). Although extracurricular activities do not seem to significantly contribute to perceived pressure, the multitude of demands in a student's life may increase pressure to complete schoolwork on time and study efficiently for exams (Vermeulen et al., 2021).

CONFIRMATION FROM THE FIELD

'School is almost competing with social media, the hockey club, etc. That is why having a role model within the school is very important.'

– Jan, teacher

School as a support factor

School and the social norms around it thus seem a big cause of stress amongst youth, and at the same time, schools are in a strong position to support well-being. In a study by Peeters et al. (2022), the support factors that could reduce school pressure and stress among Dutch youth were mapped on different levels, using scientific literature and perspectives from professionals, policymakers, parents, and youth*. As shown in Figure 2.1, schools can have a positive influence on youth well-being at all of these levels. Schools can foster a supportive environment, effective teaching, student-student interaction, positive student-teacher relationships, and a connection between students and the school.

There are several ways a school could prioritise well-being. GGD GHOR Nederland et al. (2024) advise school management to support youth in learning ways to de-stress and to make mental health more open to discussion. 'Psychology in het Onderwijs' also emphasises that addressing well-being and fostering resilience needs to become a norm in school culture, already from the very first year (Wolters, 2025). Currently, training, talks, and workshops are available as interventions for schools to implement. This can be beneficial: for example, school-based Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs have been shown to benefit adolescents' prosocial behaviour, attitudes, academic achievement, and SEL skills, and to reduce emotional distress (Durlak et al., 2022).

Some of these interventions are delivered by teachers, while others are provided by external facilitators, and Durlak et al. (2022) show that it is unclear which approach works best in secondary schools. However, if integrating well-being and speaking up about stress and pressure are to become the norm, as noted by Wolters (2025) and Dopmeijer et al. (2023), teachers play a significant role, as they are students' points of contact, immediate surroundings, and daily influences. They have the potential to act as advocates for well-being. It is the school's responsibility to support teachers in this. For example, research indicates that teacher training is beneficial before implementing a well-being intervention that includes communication strategies and mental health content, to ensure classroom comfort and promote responsiveness and engagement (Mason et al., 2025).

*The research highlights the importance of accounting for societal and systemic influences when reducing the stress and pressure of school, therefore, some of the systemic and other influences that were taken into consideration during this project, are discussed in Attachment 1.



Figure 2.1: Protective factors for youth well-being in the Netherlands as retreived from Peeters et al. (2022).

A lack of role models

The Netherlands Institute of Mental Health and Addiction, Trimbos, performed a study about the risk factors and solutions to stress and pressure to perform in Dutch higher education, in collaboration with students and experts (Dopmeijer et al., 2023). According to their research, stress and pressure are linked to the greater freedom of choice that comes with the relative prosperity that students experience nowadays. This is due to a lack of social role models to help students shape their choices, identity and understanding of what is 'good enough'. The researcher argues that, as a result, students may seek reassurance and a sense of safety, for example, through more extracurricular activities or a higher grade point average.

CONFIRMATION FROM THE FIELD

"A six is fine, but because others have higher grades, I don't think it's good enough."

- Student in de podcast 'Jong Geleerd' (Van Der Burg et al., 2022)

The systemic protective factors promoted by the Trimbos-institute include social support, acknowledging and normalising low amounts of stress and pressure, enhancing resilience skills, and providing role models to do so. They describe role models explicitly as a possible protective factor, with three major functions.

1. Opening up conversations about well-being and normalising doing so.

2. Sharing experiences related to well-being, stress, and performance pressure, helping to identify which levels of stress and pressure are normal and which are too high.

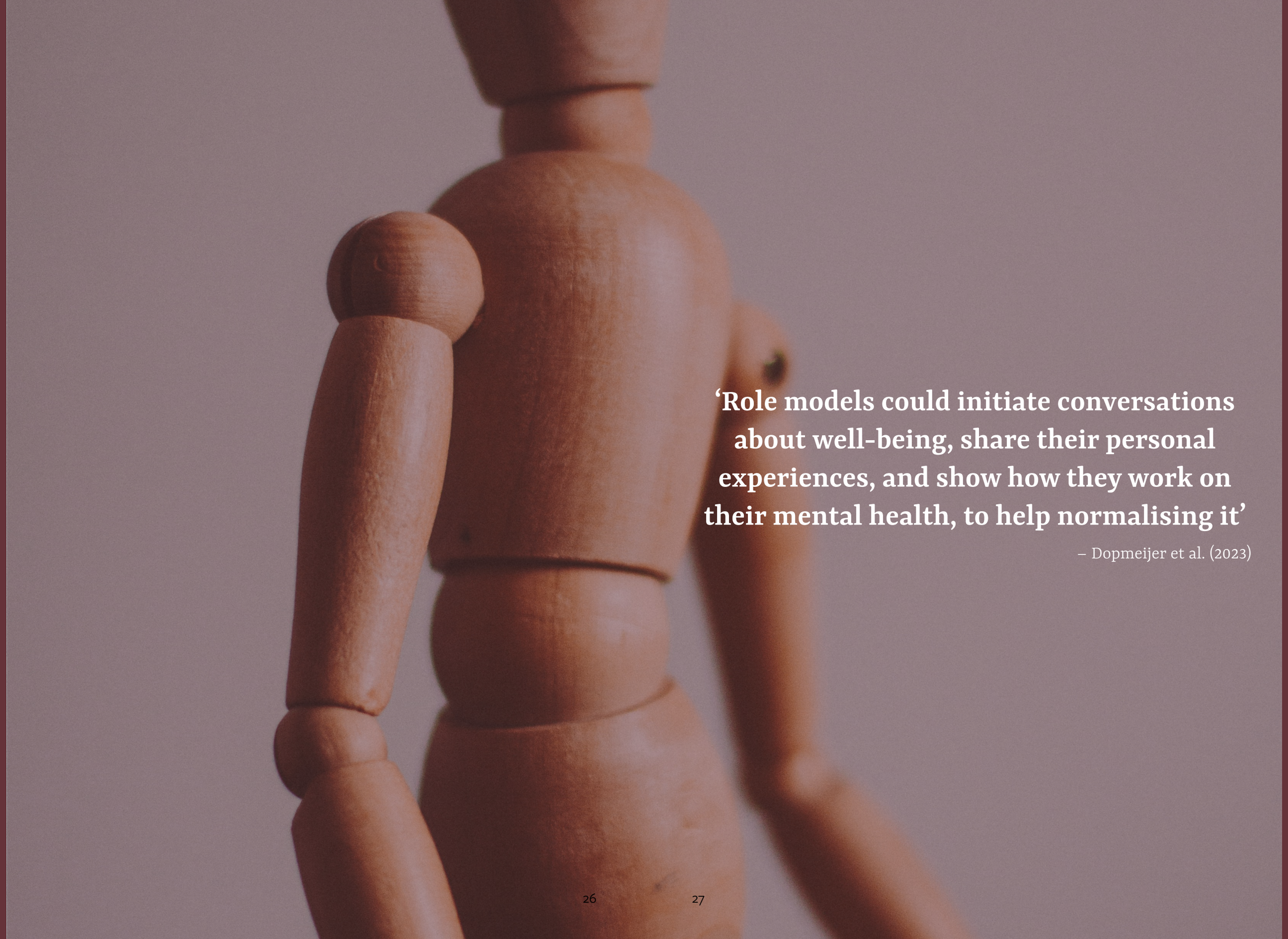
3. Showing how they work on improving their well-being and mental health, making it normal to prioritise your own mental health.

According to the researchers, there are not enough people who exemplify these three points. For example, social media often shows only the fun and positive side of people's lives, and schools do not discuss well-being and resilience strategies that much. They advise parents and teachers to consider these three points more often, showing youth that they are not alone in experiencing stress, pressure, and setbacks. This way, they could contribute to a change in norms (Dopmeijer et al., 2023).

The research by Dopmeijer et al. was conducted within a higher education setting. However, providing more role models in secondary schools could be just as beneficial, if not more so, because it could establish these protective norms, identity references, and resilience skills at an earlier age. This is emphasised in other literature. For instance, Gibson (2003) shows that role models play a big part in forming a 'viable self-concept', which includes beliefs about one's self, identity, skills, character, and expectations. This includes self-esteem. Role models are especially impactful for younger people who have not yet fully developed this self-concept, such as youth in secondary schools. Role models could encourage them to shape their identity through behaviour, skills, attitudes, ways of working, confidence, leadership, etc. (Gibson, 2003). In turn, a well-developed self-concept directly impacts our well-being, as it increases resilience, improves our feeling of worth, and is linked to positive interactions and communication with others (Cherry, 2025).

Furthermore, in a study about the impact of role models amongst nearly 200 children, the 70% that had a role model were associated with higher interests in education, better happiness, less risky behaviour, more safety and better self-esteem compared to the group without a role model (Atif et al., 2022). Lastly, in 2020, Kearney et al. conducted research on the influence of role models, media, and mentors on the development of children in first and secondary education in the United States. They state that role models have a significant impact on students' social learning and on their views of themselves and the world around them. The researchers pledge to implement role models as advocates for, e.g., positive health behaviour, because it is a cost-effective, ready-to-implement improvement (Kearney et al., 2020).





‘Role models could initiate conversations about well-being, share their personal experiences, and show how they work on their mental health, to help normalising it’

– Dopmeijer et al. (2023)

2.2 ROLE MODEL DEFINITION

To understand the potential of a teacher as a role model, the definition and functions of a role model must first be examined. The next section will outline the origin of role modelling and its several definitions.

Origin in sociology and psychology

The term 'role model' originated from sociology, stemming from research and theory on 'reference groups.' Reference groups, a term first used by Hyman in 1942, explain how individuals adopt the standards of social groups when using information and need to make choices and judgments (Dawson & Chatman, 2001). So by just being around a social group, information is taken in, and choices are influenced by the people in the group.

In 1957, the sociologist Robert K. Merton differentiated a reference group from a 'reference individual' in his Social Theory (Merton, 1968), where a reference individual is defined as an individual to whom someone identifies in terms of behaviour and values across the different roles this individual plays. Merton, in this theory, is the first to use the term 'role model', being a specific type of reference individual: 'the concept of role model can be thought of as more restricted in scope, denoting a more limited identification with an individual in only one or a selected few of his roles'. What he means is that someone is a role model when only certain aspects of a person's identity, not their entire identity, are used as a reference by someone else. For example, a parent can be a role model to a child when the child takes the parent as a reference for the behavioural norms in the household, but not for the parent's religion or hobbies. The parent is a reference individual, but only in one or a few of their roles, therefore making them a role model.

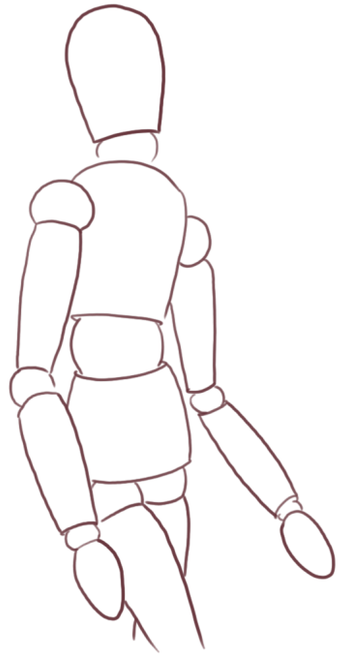
Around the same time, the psychologist Albert Bandura was researching behavioural responses to observation and imitation, resulting in his 'Social Learning Theory' (Bandura, 1971; Kretchmar, 2024). This theory explains how behaviour is learned through observation and highlights how 'models' (those who demonstrate the behaviour) influence this. The models can introduce new behaviours and help develop social competencies, attributes, and skills. The theory further states that the learner takes not one, but different models to form their behaviour, and that the prestige, status, power, and success of the model affect the influence this model has.

A related mechanism is the "chameleon effect" (Chartrand & Bargh, 1999), which shows that in social interactions, merely perceiving another person's behaviour can increase the likelihood of responding in a similar way, often without awareness or intention.

So, where Merton explained the learner referencing an individual in replicating behaviour and making choices and judgements about norms and needs (which also has to do with the group that this individual is a part of), Bandura explained the psychological construct of copying behaviour through observation of a model. These theories together form the base of role model theory. The chameleon effect further shows the influence of social interactions on behavioural copying. As teachers are naturally around students in a social context, students can thus automatically and unconsciously adopt their behaviour.

Current definition

The term role model has been used more broadly after its introduction by Metron. For example, the Cambridge University Press (2025a) defines a role model as 'a person whom someone admires and whose behaviour they try to copy' and the American Psychological Association (2018) defines a role model as 'a person or group serving as an exemplar for the goals, attitudes, or behaviour of an individual, who identifies with and seeks to imitate the role model.' In the context of improving youth well-being in school, it is important not to rely too heavily on these narrow, admiration-based definitions. Young people may not always see their teachers as people they admire, and yet teachers can still shape students' behaviour to positively influence their well-being. Later in this report, we will explore how the term role model is understood and used in school settings by both teachers and students. In this context, it goes beyond 'someone who is admired': it also includes teachers as everyday role models whose behaviour demonstrates possible ways to deal with stress, pressure, setbacks, and emotions.

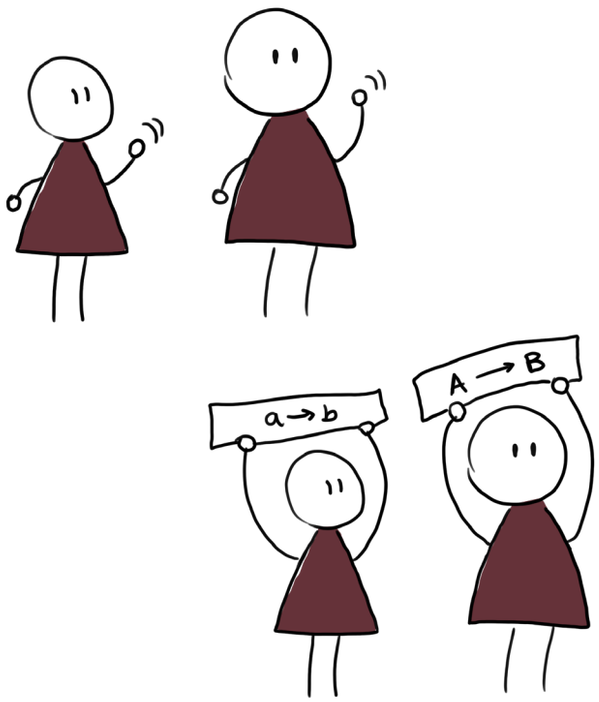


2.3 ROLE MODEL FUNCTIONS

To make sense of what a role model for well-being could achieve, the role model's functions are explained. An extensive literature review of the definition of role models in occupational and educational settings by Morgenroth et al. (2015) will serve as a foundation. They used more than 100 references to integrate role model and motivational expectancy-value literature into a theoretical framework. They argue that the shared reoccurring definition of a role model can be described as three interrelated functions: '(a) they show us how to perform a skill and achieve a goal — they are behavioural models; (b) they show us that a goal is attainable — they are representations of the possible, and (c) they make a goal desirable — they are inspirations.'

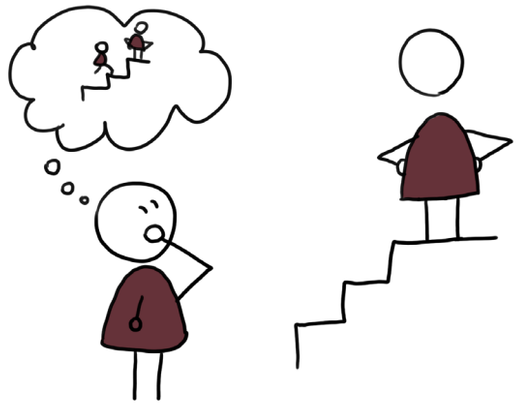
Behavioural model

As a behavioural model, a role model shows how to reach a goal and what behaviour is required to do so. By copying the role model's behaviour exactly, the learner should be able to reach a similar goal. This is called vicarious learning (Morgenroth et al., 2015). In our context, a behavioural model could, for example, show the student how they can become resilient to pressure to perform, stress, setbacks, worries, and insecurities, by providing tools and behaviours that are easy to copy.



Representing the possible

A role model could also represent the possible, showing that a goal is attainable. Especially when a role model has a similar background and characteristics as the learner, a role model in this function can make a goal become more attainable (Morgenroth et al., 2015). To improve well-being, a teacher could, for example, convey that it is possible to feel better after feeling down, or to get over insecurities and stress. They could show that it is possible to find your people, with whom you feel completely yourself, and that this might happen later than secondary school. They could represent that it is possible to feel calm in the current state of the world, even when you feel a lot of pressure.



Inspiration

The third function of a role model is to be an inspiration. This means it shows someone a new goal and inspires them to adopt it, becoming more like the role model (Morgenroth et al., 2015). A teacher could be an inspiration for improving well-being by showing students new goals that promote resilience. Whether a goal is new to a student depends on the student and varies for each person. A student could be inspired by a way of thinking, a norm they have never heard of or been taught, or a new way of coping with stress. For example, a teacher could model positive thinking and self-talk, which a student might (unconsciously) adopt.



Attainability

The motivational process and functions of role modelling, as described by Morgenroth et al. (2015), were empirically supported in 2018 by Gartzia et al. (2021). They emphasise the importance of the role model being perceived as attainable, meaning the observer expects to achieve the role model's success. The role model, therefore, should show realistic outcomes and not be too far away (physically and psychologically), or too different from the observer. The researchers name teachers as an attainable role model and suggest that such a role model has a stronger influence on motivation and expectancy than a highly successful individual. For example, a teacher is more attainable than a Nobel Prize winner; the ways that a teacher copes with stress and pressure might be more relevant to a student than those of a Nobel Prize winner.

Role models for behavioural change

Simultaneously with the theories on role modelling, after the introduction of Bandura's Social Learning Theory, the field of behaviour prediction started to develop. One of the most widely used models for predicting social behaviour was published by Icek Ajzen in 1991: the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 2011). This theory describes that the best way to predict human social behaviour is through their intention towards that behaviour, which is dependent on three values:

- **Attitude toward the behaviour**

This depends on behavioural beliefs, whether the expected outcomes of the behaviour will be positive or negative.

- **Subjective norms**

This is shaped by normative beliefs about the expectations and norms of important others.

- **Perceived behavioural control**

This is based on control beliefs, about the ability to control and execute the behaviour, and how easy it is. This factor can also directly influence behaviour.

Interestingly, these values overlap with Morgenroth's Motivational Theory of Role Modelling. A role model could change attitudes towards behaviour by modelling the behaviour and its potential outcomes, or by inspiring the learner by showing behaviour they might not have considered admirable. In the same way, a role model shapes subjective norms when they demonstrate beliefs, a mindset, or norms that inspire admiration and a sense of attainability. Lastly, beliefs about behavioural control are shaped by role models, who show how behaviour is executed, how easy it is, and how to control it.

Building on this theory, several other behaviour theories were published in the years that followed. Most of them have quite a bit of overlap, but a slightly different focus (Kraal, 2023).

The COM-B model

In 2011, Michie et al. evaluated nineteen existing behaviour change frameworks based on comprehensiveness, coherence and clear links to overarching models of behaviour. They combined the frameworks into a new overarching model: the COM-B model (Michie et al., 2011). This model is relevant and applicable to design and provides a strong explanation of the constructs of behavioural change (Kraal, 2023). Therefore, the COM-B model is used as a framework to evaluate the behavioural change that a role model might induce. The model shows a behavioural system in which the three elements of Capabilities, Opportunities, and Motivation determine whether a behaviour occurs. In Figure 2.2, the model is explained.

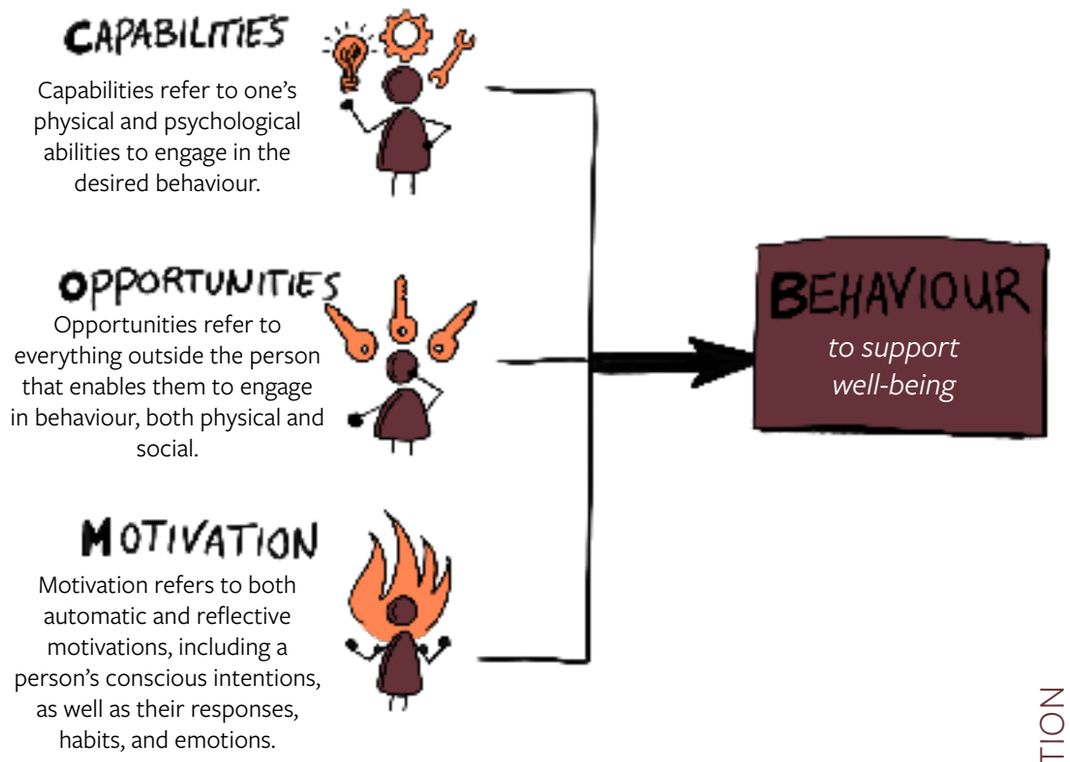


Figure 2.2: COM-B model for evaluating role model influence on youth behaviour

2.4 OVERVIEW OF YOUTH'S ROLE MODELS

Youth's role models seem to be mostly family members, such as parents, siblings or grandparents (Atif et al., 2022; Bricheno & Thornton, 2007). Besides family, friends are chosen as role models (Bricheno & Thornton, 2007). Media figures, such as singers, politicians, or sportsmen, also serve as role models and can positively influence students' aspirations (Kearney et al., 2020). Figure 2.3 presents an overview of students' potential role models.

The fact that family members are most often chosen as role models for youth highlights the influence of the home environment and explains why schools should also provide strong, supportive role models. Teachers can offer youth alternative perspectives and expand the norms, expectations, skills, and beliefs they may primarily learn at home. This is particularly important for youth who are exposed to negative examples at home, have weak family bonds, or feel they lack role models within their families.

On top of that, it is important to note that the learner does not rely on just one model but on multiple models to develop their behaviour. This means that students adopt different behaviours, opinions, and values by observing various role models in their environment, such as parents, different teachers, and peers (Bandura, 1971; American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 2017). The specific elements a person adopts as a role model depend, on one hand, on the individual student, their goals, and aspirations (Morgenroth et al., 2015). On the other hand, it depends on the role model's personality, behaviour, attributes, and goals, which vary from person to person. Consequently, students may consider different people as role models, each fulfilling a distinct role.

Teachers as role models

Teachers have an evident impact as role models, influencing the performance in school and career decisions of their students, especially when gender and race is similar (Kearney et al., 2020). Mahmoudi (2025) argues that teachers act as role models, e.g., for ethics and behaviour, due to the close relationship with students. Wentzel (2010), as cited in Löper and Hellmich (2024), showed that teachers indeed act as role models for their students.

Sanderse (2012), however, shows in an extensive psychological and peda-gogical literature review, that relatively few adolescents recognise teachers as role models. This is emphasised in a study in two primary and two secondary schools in South-East England, where only 2.4% of pupils referred to their teachers as a role model (Bricheno & Thornton, 2007). Sanderse (2012) argues that adolescents may not be able to recognise teachers as role models when they are still in school, since they are more likely to name teachers as former role models, so retrospectively. For example, in their study, 10% of students recognised their teacher as a former role model, whereas 3% recognised a teacher as a current role model.



Figure 2.3: The potential role models of Dutch youth.

Explicit and intentional role modelling

In addition, according to Sanderse (2012), students rarely see their teachers as role models because of the implicit ways in which their actions and behaviour are communicated. Role modelling now happens unintentionally and unconsciously, as teachers often do not explicitly discuss their norms and values but rather infuse their personal style in a non-verbal, more implicit way. If role modelling stays implicit, students might not recognise it, and therefore will not label their teachers as role models. It is therefore recommended to make role modelling more explicit by explaining why certain moral traits or behaviours matter and how students could develop them. In addition, Sanderse (2012) assessed the deliberate and conscious use of role modelling as a teaching method, which is uncommon. Teachers are not taught how to be role models, and often do not know exactly what it entails.

> *'Students should learn to understand what in the role model is worth following.'*
>
> – Sanderse (2012)

CONFIRMATION FROM THE FIELD

In an expert interview discussing the teacher as a role model in current interventions in schools, researchers from the Trimbos-Institute explained that they communicate to teachers that it is important to "set the right example," but that this has not yet been explored in depth. In interventions, tools, and training, the term "role modelling" appears, but it is not clearly defined. It is generally linked to teachers setting an example through their behaviour, and to the class perceiving a corresponding behavioural classroom norm. However, it is mostly used implicitly, without further explanation or specific depth.

‘What teachers don’t know yet is what being a role model really means, why it is important and how it can best be done.’

– Sanderse (2012)

2.5 THE TEACHER'S ROLES IN YOUTH WELL-BEING

To understand what a teacher could intentionally and explicitly model, we first want to look at the teacher's roles in fostering youth well-being. The support factors described by Peeters et al. (2022) highlight the importance of relationships, attitudes, interactions, and psychological needs related to autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Furthermore, as a teacher aiming to model resilience, it is essential to cultivate resilience oneself and practice self-disclosure. These factors will be discussed in this paragraph. The teacher also has additional roles related to fostering student well-being that are less directly connected to role modelling. These are shown in Attachment 2 and have been used to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the profession.

Relationships, attitude and interaction

Several studies emphasise the importance of the student-teacher relationship in improving student well-being. In the overview in Figure 2.1, the supportive and positive relationship with a teacher and with peers are mentioned as support factors, as well as interaction with the direct environment (Peeters et al., 2022). When a student-teacher relationship is good, the student might feel safe enough to go to the teacher with their worries or communicate their needs. Furthermore, the student might be more motivated to study well: in a study across three Colleges in the United States, positive teacher-student relationships have been shown to have a significant positive effect on students' academic performance, behaviour, motivation, and engagement (Bashir et al., 2014). Another study shows that youths' connection with an older, more experienced individual who guides them, such as a teacher, is positively associated with their well-being (Van Dam et al., 2018). Social-emotional development is enhanced, including prosocial behaviour and self-esteem. Additionally, psychosocial problems are slightly reduced, indicating less depression, anxiety, and problematic behaviour.

Endedijk et al. (2021) demonstrate that the student-teacher relationship and teacher attitude not only affect students and teachers themselves, but also the student's social position relative to peers. If a teacher behaves positively or negatively towards a student, the student is more likely to be perceived similarly by peers in the same classroom, as students imitate their teachers' behaviour. As we have seen in Figure 2.1, a positive relation with peers is in turn a support factor for youth well-being. Another study on teachers' attitudes towards students with learning difficulties further confirms that teachers' attitudes influence how other students interact with their peers (Löper en Hellmich, 2024).

These various relationships in the classroom shape the climate in the classroom. In turn, a safe and pleasant classroom climate can directly influence students' well-being (GGD GHOR Nederland et al., 2024; Peeters et al., 2022). Furthermore, the class climate impacts the teacher's emotions and well-being, which influence student well-being (Frenzel et al., 2021; Jennings & Greenberg, 2008).

The teacher's relationships, attitude, and interactions with students can thus significantly influence their well-being. As a role model, this is particularly important, as the teacher's behaviour could set a norm and an example for the entire class. For example, if a teacher has a very relaxed, light-hearted attitude and behaviour, students might take it on. The teacher could represent the possible by showing which (nice, fun) interactions are possible in daily life and how they can affect their mood, or inspire how they connect with others.

Autonomy, competence and relatedness

According to the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan (1985), there are three basic psychological needs that must be fulfilled for optimal personal development, motivation and psychological growth of an individual: 'autonomy', 'competence' and 'relatedness'. By fostering these needs, well-being is enhanced (Ryan & Deci, 2000). It is particularly interesting in a school context, as teachers could implement these needs to optimise their students' well-being, as research in the Dutch secondary school context shows (Conijn et al., 2024; Hornstra et al., 2025; Wolters, 2025). In addition, according to a cross-cultural study analysing data from over 513.000 students, teaching that supports students' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness results in better subjective, eudaimonic, and social well-being, regardless of gender, socioeconomic status, and parental support (Wang et al., 2021). It is a theory that is already widely applied in Dutch education (Hornstra et al., 2025).

CONFIRMATION FROM THE FIELD

'In our research, we are looking at how to implement the SDT into daily teaching. In that way, improving well-being is not about spending an extra half hour or a day talking to students about how they actually feel, it's more about what you do in your daily interactions.'

– Researcher youth-program at Trimbos-Institute

Autonomy

Students need to feel that they can make their own decisions and are in charge of their own behaviour (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Hornstra et al., 2025). For autonomy to be effective in promoting greater motivation, engagement, and well-being, students need sufficient structure and guidance (Conijn et al., 2024; Patzak & Zhang, 2025).

Different role models can foster autonomy by showing a range of behaviours and identities without pressuring others to adopt them. Exposure to multiple role models allows students to decide for themselves which behaviours feel beneficial and inspiring to adopt, fostering a sense of ownership over their actions. At the same time, role models can provide guidance and structure by making concrete behavioural options visible. For example, when a student learns one way to cope with stress from their teacher and another from their parents, they can choose what works best for them and feel more in control of their actions (autonomy).

Competence
Students need to feel capable, understanding that they have the competence to do what they want or are asked to (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Hornstra et al., 2025). They need to know what is expected of them and have a structure to understand the steps they should take. Without this guidance, they can feel lost and may lose confidence in their abilities.

Role models promote competence by demonstrating skills and strategies. They can also highlight that competence develops over time: everyone starts somewhere, and learning can be difficult. This can motivate youth to pursue goals and skills by showing that competence is attainable. Additionally, role models can shape norms, helping youth feel capable when they face challenges they might otherwise think they are alone in. For instance, when a role model acknowledges that it is normal to need help and shows what asking for support looks like (e.g., contacting a teacher early, using tutoring, or studying with a peer), students who struggle may feel less alone and more capable because help-seeking becomes a normal, effective strategy.

CONFIRMATION FROM THE FIELD

'There is nothing more frustrating for a student than not being able to grasp the things that are offered to them.'

– Alice, teacher

Relatedness
Students need to experience relatedness, which means feeling safe, connected, and seen (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Hornstra et al., 2025). This involves the student-teacher relationship, attitude, and also peer relationships.

Role modelling links naturally to relatedness, because a role model is someone you feel connected to or can see yourself in. A role model can show behaviours, goals, or feelings that are inspiring and attainable, helping students feel recognised for how they act and what they experience. For example, if a teacher shared their experience of mourning, it could help a student who is grieving feel seen and less alone.

CONFIRMATION FROM THE FIELD

'I think that triangle of autonomy, connection and competence is very important. It is your job as a teacher to facilitate those things. By putting out your empathetic feelers and daring to be vulnerable yourself from time to time.'

– Gerwin, teacher

Fostering own well-being

Extensive research amongst teachers and school leaders shows that teachers in the Netherlands in 2024 experienced higher workload pressure, while receiving less societal recognition than in 2018 (Buisman et al., 2025). One in seven secondary school teachers experiences high work pressure. Administrative tasks increase, changes at the school add more stress, and the feeling of responsibility for students' achievements is growing. Furthermore, teachers more often have to correct student behaviour. All these factors contribute to increased stress amongst teachers. Buisman et al. therefore recommend reducing teachers' workload, giving them room to focus on teaching their subjects, and increasing societal recognition and appreciation.
Other research shows that teachers' social and emotional competence and well-being are directly related to healthier teacher-student relationships, effective classroom management, effective SEL implementation, and a healthy classroom climate (Jennings & Greenberg, 2008). In turn, these things influence students' emotional, social and academic outcomes.

Furthermore, according to Frenzel et al. (2009), there is a positive link between teacher enjoyment in the classroom and student enjoyment, and this effect is mediated by teacher enthusiasm. This shows that teacher enthusiasm directly affects students' well-being, as it could improve their mood. Other research also shows that a teacher's emotions can impact students (Frenzel et al., 2021). An explanation from psychology is through the phenomenon 'emotional contagion', which shows that people take over others' emotions regardless of the origin of the emotions (Singer & Tusche, 2013). This often happens unconsciously.

These insights highlight the importance of fostering teachers' well-being and resilience, which directly relates to student well-being and is especially important if teachers want to exemplify healthy norms and behaviours as role models for youth.

Self-disclosure

Another important factor in role modelling well-being is self-disclosure. Self-disclosure refers to 'revealing personal or private information about oneself to other people' and is beneficial for feeling closeness and improving trust (American Psychological Association, 2023). Relevant self-disclosure from teachers to students can promote engagement, but excessive levels may cause anxiety for some students (Bouhafa et al., 2023). Therefore, it is important to structure self-disclosure properly.

Teacher self-disclosure can be understood through three main aspects: amount, relevance, and valence, and student reactions heavily depend on these aspects (Cayanus & Martin, 2008). Therefore, the amount of self-disclosure is important, and teachers should assess the relevance of what they share. Valence refers to the subjective experience of an emotion's positivity or negativity; in this context, teachers should avoid sharing overly detailed or negative information (Emotiplus, 2024). These are important considerations, as they could influence the success of implementation of role modelling interventions.

2.6 DESIGN CHALLENGE

To conclude, secondary school teachers could be a great source of support as role models for improving youth well-being and resilience in the Netherlands (Dopmeijer et al., 2023). Sanderse (2012) explained that the deliberate, conscious use of role modelling as a teaching method is uncommon and that teachers should be made aware of what role modelling can do and how to be intentional and explicit in its use. When using role modelling for well-being in secondary schools, there does not seem to be clear guidance for teachers available at the moment. This project will explore ways to support teachers in role modelling, aiming to design a solution that benefits both teachers and students. Therefore, the design challenge is framed as follows:

> How can we best support teachers in secondary schools in the Netherlands in their function as role models to improve youth well-being?

From the theories, we can conclude that we need (1) to make teachers aware of their potential as role model, so to get them familiar with the role model functions and according behaviour, (2) to create tools for the teacher to actually being able to implement the role model theories explicitly and intentionally, and (3) to get students to see their teachers as role models, so to make the behaviour of the teacher attainable, desirable and significant for students.

This problem definition is based on several assumptions:

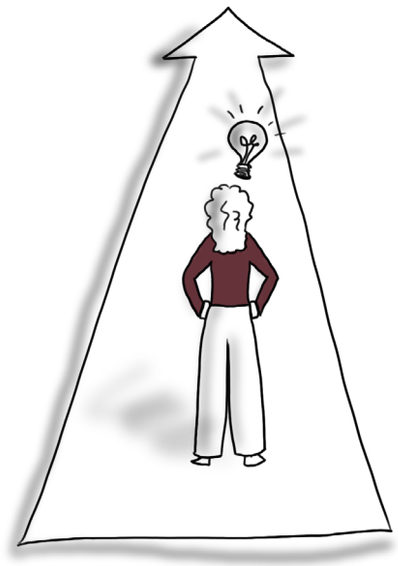
- The theories presented in this chapter are applicable to the Dutch secondary school context.
- Teachers see potential in serving as role models for well-being.
- Students can learn resilience from their teachers, who serve as role models for well-being in this explicit and intentional manner.

To test these assumptions, initial field research has been conducted, yielding a clearer understanding of the design challenge and confirming its relevance in the Dutch secondary school context. After this initial research phase, solutions were created and retested in the field, informing the implementation of the final design.

Design requirements

This chapter results in several initial requirements for a solution.

- The design should improve student well-being by focusing on resilience, given that discussing mental health as 'problems' can have negative effects (Foulkes & Andrews, 2023).
- The design should improve one or more of the following factors of the Multidimensional Well-being in Youth Scale by Green et al. (2022): impact, purpose, meaning, coping with stress and worry, feeling respected, appreciated, and loved, and/or family relationships or self-confidence.
- The design should have the school as the context for implementation (Peeters et al., 2022).
- The design should introduce role models to establish healthy norms and behaviour (Dopmeijer et al., 2023).
- The design should address behaviour change among students in one or more aspects of the COM-B model (Michie et al., 2011).
- The design should support teachers as role models for well-being (Sanderse, 2012).
- The design should foster the student-teacher relationship and bonds among students. The design should enhance daily interactions.
- The design should foster student autonomy, competence and relatedness.





How can we best support teachers in secondary schools in the Netherlands in their function as role models to improve youth well-being?



3. METHODOLOGY

What
This Chapter will explain the project approach and the various methods used to gather the insights presented in the report.

For whom
If you are interested in the quality and setup of the research, this chapter helps you understand how the research has been conducted.

3.1 PROJECT APPROACH AND OVERVIEW

For this project, a Human-Centred Design (HCD) approach was used. The project was centred on both student well-being and the teacher-student relationship and therefore had a strong focus on human interaction and context. It was important to design with the human experience at the centre and keep it in mind throughout the project to create meaningful solutions for both teachers and students. The HCD process and the phases within this project are explained in Figure 3.1. The lines of research are shown in Figure 3.2.

The research started with a broad exploration of the context through desk research, interviews with teachers and experts, and student sessions. After that, a problem definition emerged, which led to the iterative phases of idea generation and concept development. A full overview of activities is shown in Figure 3.3 on the next page.

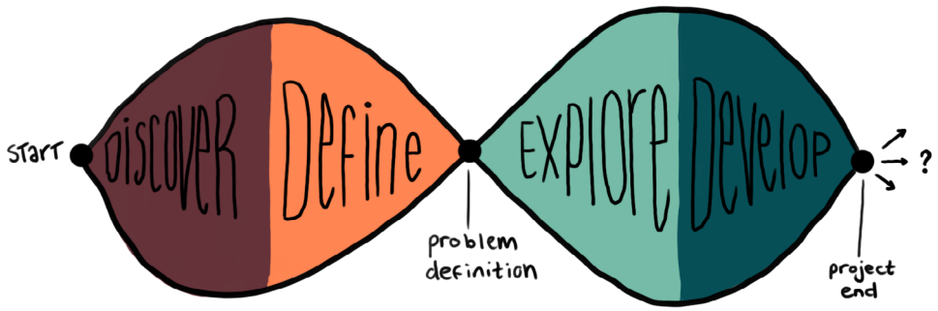


Figure 3.1: The Human-Centred Design process.

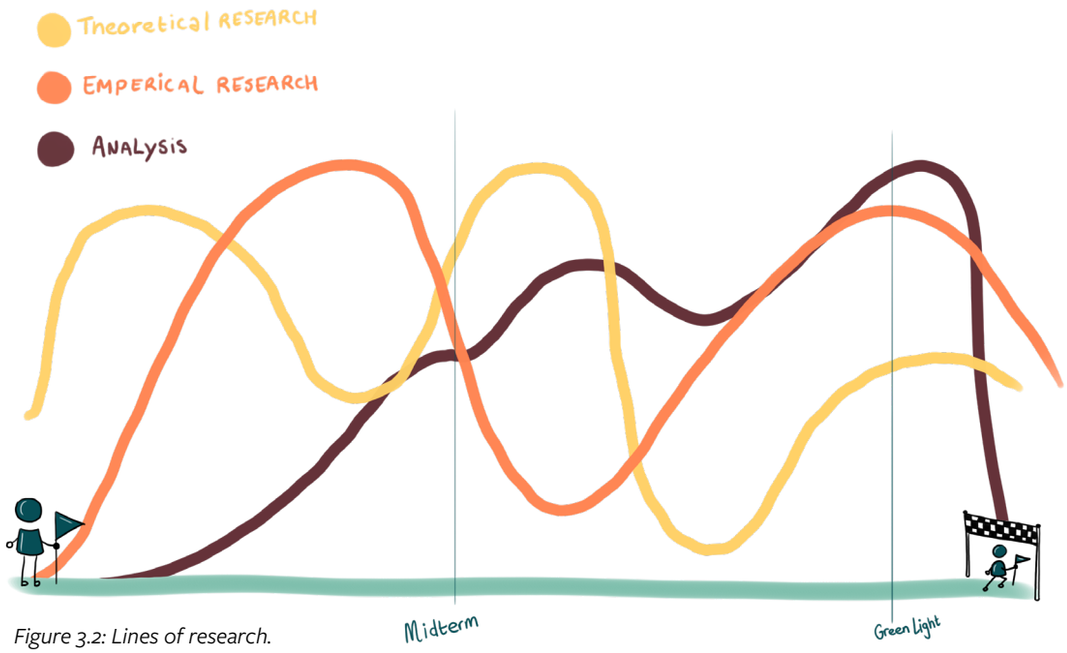


Figure 3.2: Lines of research.

In total I have spoken to:

47 students

45 teachers

10 experts



And visited 5 different schools in the Netherlands.

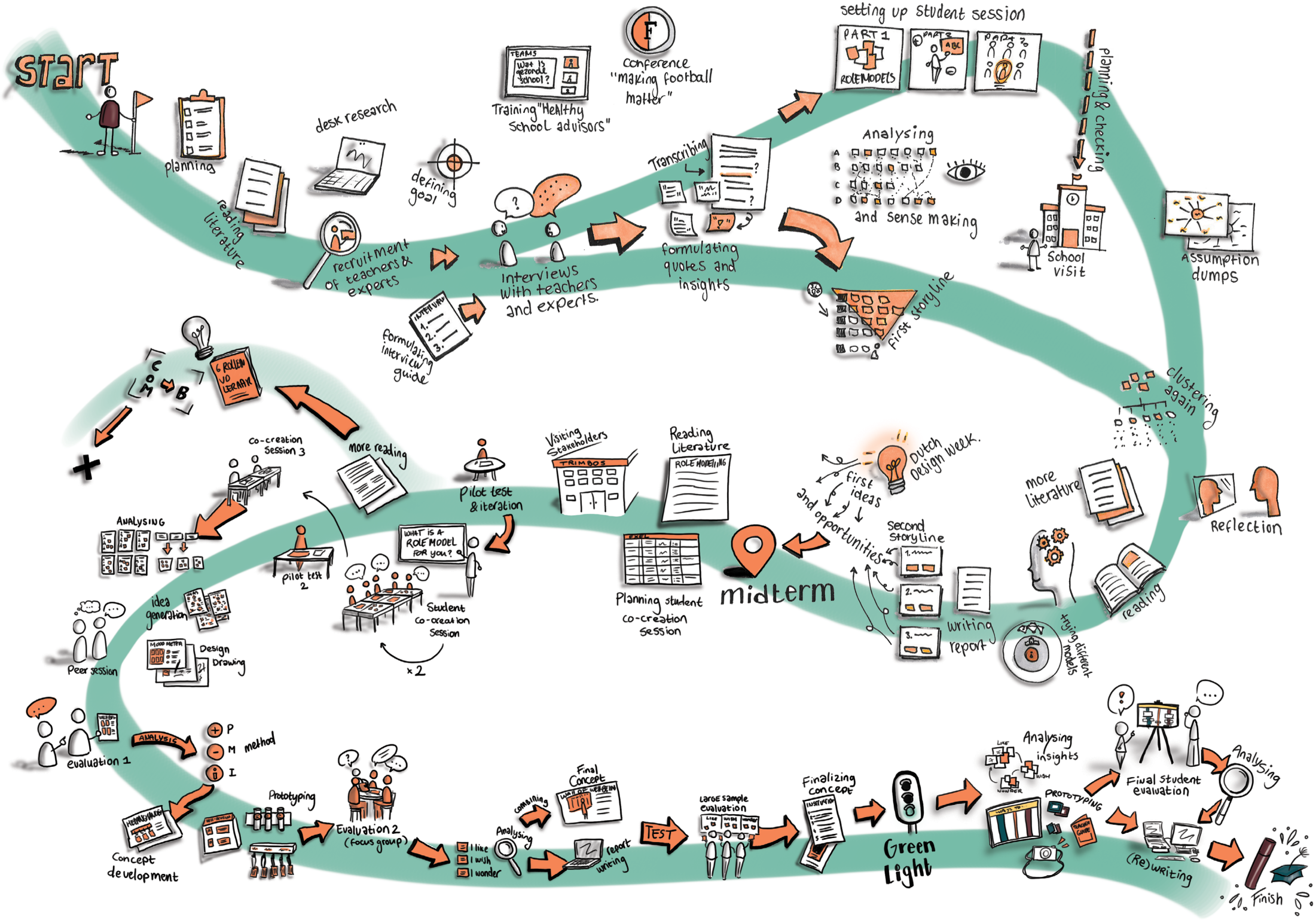


Figure 3.3: Overview of activities.


Trimbos
instituut


dutch
design
week

3.2 EXPLORATION OF CONTEXT

To test the assumptions that resulted from the theories and further explore the context, elaborate field research has been conducted in Dutch secondary schools, including teacher interviews, focus groups and student sessions.

Research questions

Questions that guided this first research phase were scoped within the two main topics:

1. Well-being

- What does youth well-being mean in school contexts?
- What is the role of the school and the teacher in youth well-being? How are schools and teachers talking about youth well-being, and improving it?
- Which initiatives exist to improve youth well-being in schools?
- What are the current needs and struggles of schools and teachers when wanting to improve well-being?
- How are teachers already supporting youth well-being?

2. Role models

- Who are currently role models for Dutch youth?
- Why are these role models for them?
- What should a role model for well-being look like?
- Are teachers role models for Dutch youth, why or why not?
- Do teachers see themselves as role models? Why (not) and in what way?
- What should a teacher provide, be, or do to be a role model?
- What can help a teacher in this role model function?

Teacher Interviews

Qualitative research was conducted through thirteen semi-structured in-depth interviews with teachers. The first nine interviews were conducted during the context exploration phase, the remaining four interviews took place in a later phase focused on testing concepts and ideas; however, they followed a similar structure, and relevant parts of these conversations were also incorporated into the context insights to develop a more holistic understanding and confirm the initial interpretation.

Participants and recruitment

Teachers have been recruited via LinkedIn messages and personal networks. Interviews were conducted with 12 teachers from 9 schools, including 7 females and 5 males. The teachers ranged in age from 26 to 60 years, and all are also mentors (Figure 3.4). All participants were Dutch-speaking and resided in the Netherlands. Two teacher interviews were conducted by a colleague from Healthy Start, using a different set-up and interview guide. Three teachers were also regarded as experts, as they held additional roles in their schools beyond (former) teaching.

Set-up and procedure

Most of the interviews were conducted via video call. Some interviews were conducted in person at the school. The interviews took approximately one hour. The interviews all started with an explanation of the project, including the aim of the research, the procedure, and the use of data. This information was also provided in advance through an information letter and consent form. The interviews consisted of four other parts: well-being, role of the teacher, role models, and current interventions. To structure the interviews, a pre-established interview guideline was used, as shown in Attachment 3. Follow-up questions were used to elicit personal experiences and in-depth perspectives.

All interviews were audio recorded, and additional notes were taken. The data was securely stored in the environment of Erasmus University Rotterdam. All teachers have signed consent forms prior to the interview, with detailed information attached about data storage, voluntary participation, and the possibility to withdraw. These consent forms and ethics were approved by Erasmus University Rotterdam. The consent forms, along with the information letter provided to each teacher, are shown in Attachment 4. In the introduction to each interview, the anonymity of participation and the option to withdraw from the research were highlighted.



Figure 3.4: Sample of interviewed teachers (using a pseudonym).

Analysis

The interviews were transcribed using the AI-driven Word transcription tool. These transcripts were added to a Miro board, along with sticky notes containing the most important and relevant quotes. The notes were labelled with the teacher's pseudonym. The audio recording was listened to when the transcripts remained unclear.

After each interview was reviewed, relevant quotes were extracted and clustered into four overarching topic areas: (1) causes of declining youth well-being, (2) the role of the school, (3) the role of the teacher, and (4) role models. Within each topic area, quotes were grouped into sub-themes based on recurring patterns in the data. These sub-themes were then iteratively combined into higher-level main themes. The resulting main themes formed the analytical foundation for the insights presented. Figure 3.5 provides an excerpt of the Miro board to illustrate the thematic clustering process.

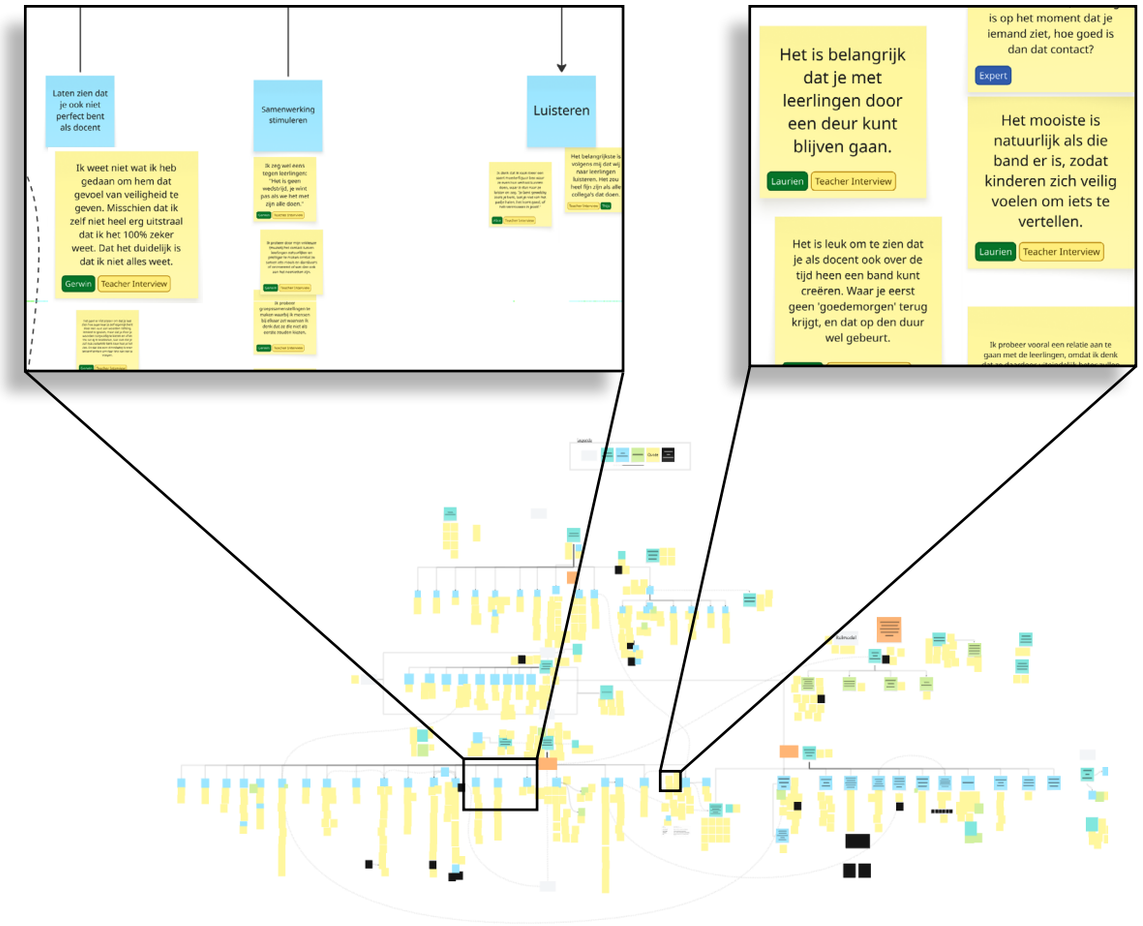


Figure 3.5: Miro board where the analysis was performed.

Expert interviews

To get more in-depth information about the topic, as well as real-life experiences from experts in fields of education or youth well-being, 9 additional interviews were conducted with stakeholders and experts from different fields related to youth mental health, science, and/or education.

Participants and recruitment

The 9 experts were recruited through Healthy Start and personal networks. The interviewed experts are working in the following fields:

- Health promotion officer at GGZ Utrecht, to promote 'Gezonde School-Aanpak'
- Neuropsychologist and researcher at Healthy Start
- Researcher and assistant professor Clinical psychology, expert in anxiety disorders amongst youth
- Researcher and university teacher at Pedagogical Sciences at University of Leiden, focusing on student-teacher and student-student relationships
- Hannah*, former student counsellor at a secondary school
- Pieter*, student counsellor, and former teacher at a secondary school
- Patricia*, suitable education counsellor at a secondary school
- Stacey*, suitable education counsellor and teacher at a secondary school
- Mandy*, support coordinator and former teacher at a secondary school

*A pseudonym was used.

Set-up, procedure and analysis

Interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams, in person, or in a focus group at a school. All lasted one hour and were guided by an expert-specific guideline. They were audio-recorded and stored securely in the environment of Erasmus University Rotterdam. Participants signed consent forms beforehand. The analysis occurred simultaneously with the teacher interviews, using the same procedure.

Context engagement

School observations

Before conducting student workshops, unofficial field observations in two schools were done, not taking any data, so no audio, notes or pictures, but still being able to grasp more of the context and see and listen to students. These observations helped better understand the school atmosphere and context, as well as the interaction dynamics between students, before running the student workshops.

Gezonde School

One of the current ways municipalities and the government are encouraging improvements in healthy living in schools is through the 'Gezonde School', a collaboration among several organisations that help schools implement healthy lifestyles and activities (Gezonde School, 2025). I have taken part in a meeting with the 'Gezonde School Adviseurs' (the team of advisors within this organisation) to learn what they are working on, why it is important, and more about (mental) health initiatives in schools and the challenges schools and teachers face. Only physical notes were taken.

Feyenoord

I have attended a conference by the Dutch football club Feyenoord, called 'Making football matter', to discover how they use role models to inspire youth to play football. Physical notes and pictures were taken.

TRAXX theatre

I attended an interactive theatre performance by TRAXX at a secondary school. The show was called 'Geluk(t)' and addressed topics such as depression, substance abuse, bullying, insecurities, and identity. I spoke with a few teachers afterwards. None of these conversations was recorded, but I used the experience to gain insights into this type of initiative, the influence of such role models, and how to share these stories and communicate what you can do in these situations. Physical notes were taken.

Student co-creative sessions

Three student co-creative sessions have been organised and facilitated: one two-hour workshop and two one-hour workshops with youth in secondary schools in the central and southern parts of the Netherlands.

Participants and recruitment

The students were recruited through one of the teachers at each school. All students were Dutch and between 16 and 18 years old. At one school, 16 students took part in the session, all from the same class. At the other school, the session had 7 students in total, all from separate classes. In total, 21 students participated in this part of the research, of whom 5 were male and 16 were female. The students received a 10-euro compensation after the workshop as a thank-you for their time and effort, provided by Healthy Start.

Pilot tests and iterations

To improve the session setup, test the timing, and assess whether the session objective would be achieved, a pilot test was conducted for each session (Figure 3.6). The pilot was conducted with a university student with no background in Industrial Design Engineering and no familiarity with the research topics. The outcomes of these pilot tests are shown in Attachment 5 and include small changes to the introduction, sequence, template materials, and timing.

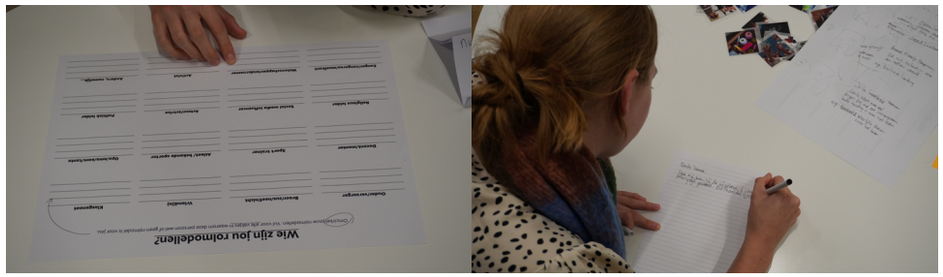


Figure 3.6: The pilot test.

Set-up and procedure

The procedure of each workshop is provided in Attachement 6. An Excel sheet was used to plan the sessions, as included in Attachment 7. Each part was carefully chosen, with methods that served the research purpose and boundary objects, preparation, and facilitation guidelines scoped out.

The workshops all took place in person at school. The first workshop took two hours, with a break in between. The second and third workshops each lasted 50 minutes. For each workshop, presentation slides (Attachment 8) and templates (Attachement 9) were used. There was one main facilitator. At the second workshop, a second facilitator played a passive (helping) role.

All sessions were audio recorded, and additional notes were taken. The data was securely stored in the environment of Erasmus University Rotterdam. All students have received, read and signed a deliberately formulated information letter and consent form as provided in Attachment 10. This ethics procedure has been approved by Erasmus University Rotterdam. As all students were aged 16+, guardian consent was not required for this study under applicable Dutch regulations and institutional guidance. We have still obtained the teacher's and the school's consent to ensure that participation in the research was voluntary. To ensure students felt safe and at ease, a slide on the session's ethics was added to the presentation (Attachment 8). This slide was explained deliberately during the session.

Analysis

The student workshops were analysed analogously, as shown in Figure 3.7. The physical templates students filled in, the clusters they created in one of the workshops, and the audio recordings were used. The quotes were translated manually from Dutch to English to ensure no loss of quality or meaning. They were written on separate sticky notes and then clustered into sub- and main themes. From there, insights emerged, eventually leading to the design directions and requirements.



Figure 3.7: Analysing student workshop results

Merging insights

All the insights from the theoretical and emperical research have been clustered and combined into different sub-themes. These sub-themes have then been clustered again, to define what it means for a teacher to be a role model for well-being (Figure 3.8). As a result, three key themes emerged for a teacher to be a role model for youth well-being: resilience, identity and interaction. These overlapping themes combine the several theoretical factors of youth well-being, role model theory, teacher roles and the fieldwork insights. The insights presented in Chapter 4 are related to these three themes for that reason.

From these three themes, a newer, more defined design direction was iteratively formulated. This served as the basis for the ideation and concept development phase: guiding idea generation, evaluation, decision-making, and solution development.



Figure 3.8: Merging Insights

3.3 IDEATION, CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION

For ideation, the 'How Might We...' and brainstorming methods were used (Van Boeijen et al., 2013). The ideation occurred alongside the empirical and desk research, resulting in ideas that were broader than what the final design goal would typically inspire. After generating numerous smaller ideas, the most promising ones were combined into 14 slightly more detailed idea directions, considering the theoretical and empirical background that had so far been discovered. In Figure 3.9, several ideas explored in this phase are shown.

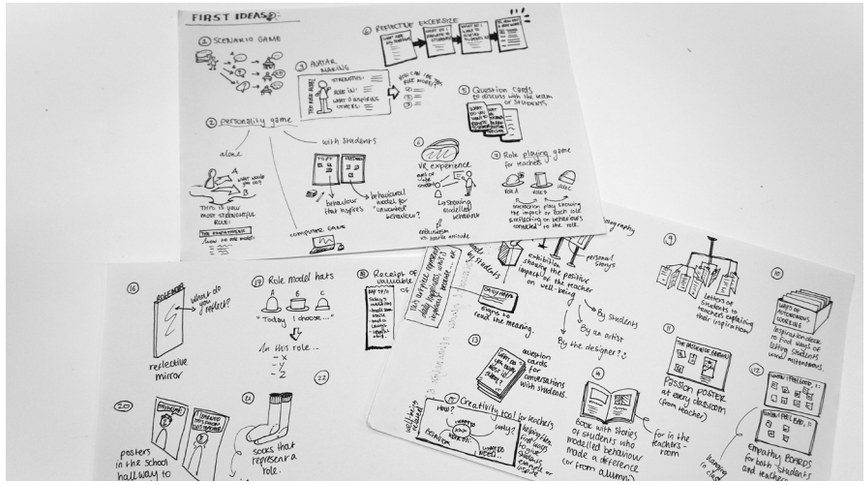


Figure 3.9: Ideation

Idea evaluation

To evaluate and understand the values in each of the ideas, the 'Product Concept Evaluation'-method was used, in which teacher and expert interviews were conducted using design drawings as pictographic concepts (Van Boeijen et al., 2013). This method was used to communicate and discover insights on the ideas, while keeping the options of iteration, change and combination open to the participants. The drawings are shown in Figure 3.10 and Attachment 11. The evaluation consisted of three different sessions.

Research questions

The first evaluation was guided by the following questions:

- In what order does the teacher place the ideas?
- Which elements does the teacher value in the product?
- Which worries does the teacher have about implementing these?
- Which things should be changed or can be combined from the ideas?



Figure 3.10: Design Drawings

Set-up and procedure

In the first session, Solution Voting, a Design Critique method, was used to gain insights into the potential of each idea relative to the others and to provide a framework for discussing its positive and negative aspects (Kerr et al., 2024). The teacher was asked to rate the ideas from most to least feasible and explain their reasoning for each placement. During the session, a thinking-aloud protocol was encouraged to understand the teacher's thought processes and provide feedback on the ideas (Kerr et al., 2024). Furthermore, the goal of identifying the downside of each idea to optimise and select a concept was explained in detail to the participant to create a safe environment for honest feedback and thereby reduce social desirability or politeness biases. In Attachment 12, the interview guideline for this interview is included.

The teacher evaluation session took place in the school where this teacher works, in their classroom. The session took a bit more than one hour. Recruitment, data collection, storage, and ethics are similar to those of the other teacher interviews. The participant received a small gift as appreciation for their time.

The ideas were furthermore evaluated by the stakeholders of Healthy Start and the project supervisors through Concept Screenings (Van Boeijen et al., 2013). Together, we selected the ideas into four concept directions that combined the ideas in a logical manner, considering the teacher's feedback. These sessions took place in a studio at the Technical University of Delft, Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering, and each lasted about 45 minutes.

Analysis

The teacher interview has been transcribed using the Word AI transcription tool. Important quotes were retrieved from this transcript and manually written on sticky notes. Those were clustered onto the drawings, yielding positive, negative, and interesting points for each idea. The PMI method was used to define the positive (Plus), negative (Minus), and most interesting (I) aspects of each idea (Van Boeijen et al., 2013). With these aspects, the design requirements were elaborated, and the ideas were combined into three concept directions.

Focus group evaluation

The three concepts were again evaluated through Product Concept Evaluation, using prototypes, focus groups, and the 'I like, I wish, I wonder...' method (Kerr et al., 2024; Van Boeijen et al., 2013). Through design drawings and low-fidelity prototypes, the concepts were given form, and the interaction with the products could be tested and evaluated (Figure 3.10 & 3.11). Focus groups were used to prompt feedback in a dynamic session, providing space for discussion and deeper insights. The 'I like, I wish, I wonder' method was used to provide insights into the concepts in a structured manner. Recruitment, data collection, storage, and ethics are similar to those of the other teacher interviews. The participants received a small gift as appreciation for their time.

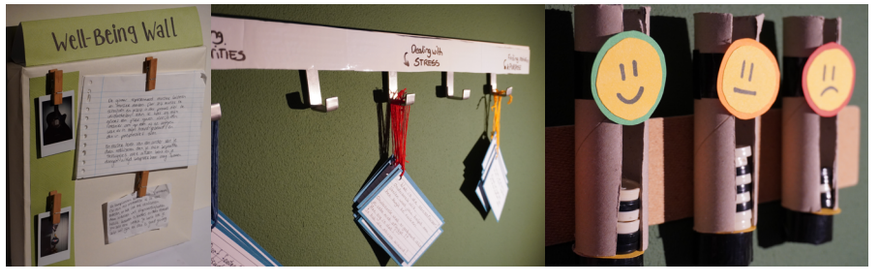


Figure 3.11: Low-fidelity prototypes.

Research questions

The second evaluation was guided by the following questions:

- What are the likes, wishes and wonders for each of the concepts?
- Which elements do the participants value in the concepts?
- Which things should be changed or can be combined from the ideas?

Set-up and procedure

The focus group comprised a teacher who is also a suitable education counsellor, a support coordinator who is also a former teacher, and another suitable education counsellor. The focus group took place in the school and lasted one hour. The setup is further shown in Chapter 4.3. The session consisted of five phases: welcome and introduction, discussion of role models and well-being, a prototype evaluation using 'I like, I wish, I wonder', choosing a preference, and closing. The full procedure is shown in Attachment 13.

Analysis

The recording was transcribed using AI, and then key quotes were transferred to analogue sticky notes. They were clustered into the different concept directions. The participants also wrote their own thoughts on sticky notes; these were clustered into likes, wishes and wonders, and design requirements for the final concept direction.

Final teacher evaluation

The final concept was evaluated with 31 teachers, guided by a presentation (Attachment 14), the design drawing shown on the right (and in Attachment 15), and the 'I like, I wish, I wonder...' method (Kerr et al., 2024; Van Boeijen et al., 2013).

Participants and recruitment

Two groups of 15 and 16 teachers, respectively, took part in a workshop during a study day. The final part of this two-hour session was dedicated to assessing the project's final concept. Participants were recruited through Healthy Start's network. They could enrol in the workshop via the school, indicating a preliminary interest in the topic.

Research questions

The evaluation of the final concept was guided by the following questions:

- What are the positive and negative aspects of this product?
- What do teachers worry about when implementing this?
- What should be changed?
- What is needed to implement this in schools?
- What do teachers wonder and wish for this product?
- Should the product be in the hallways or in the classrooms?
- Should it be a specific project in the mentor class, or a more low-key hanging in the classroom or hallway?

Set-up and procedure

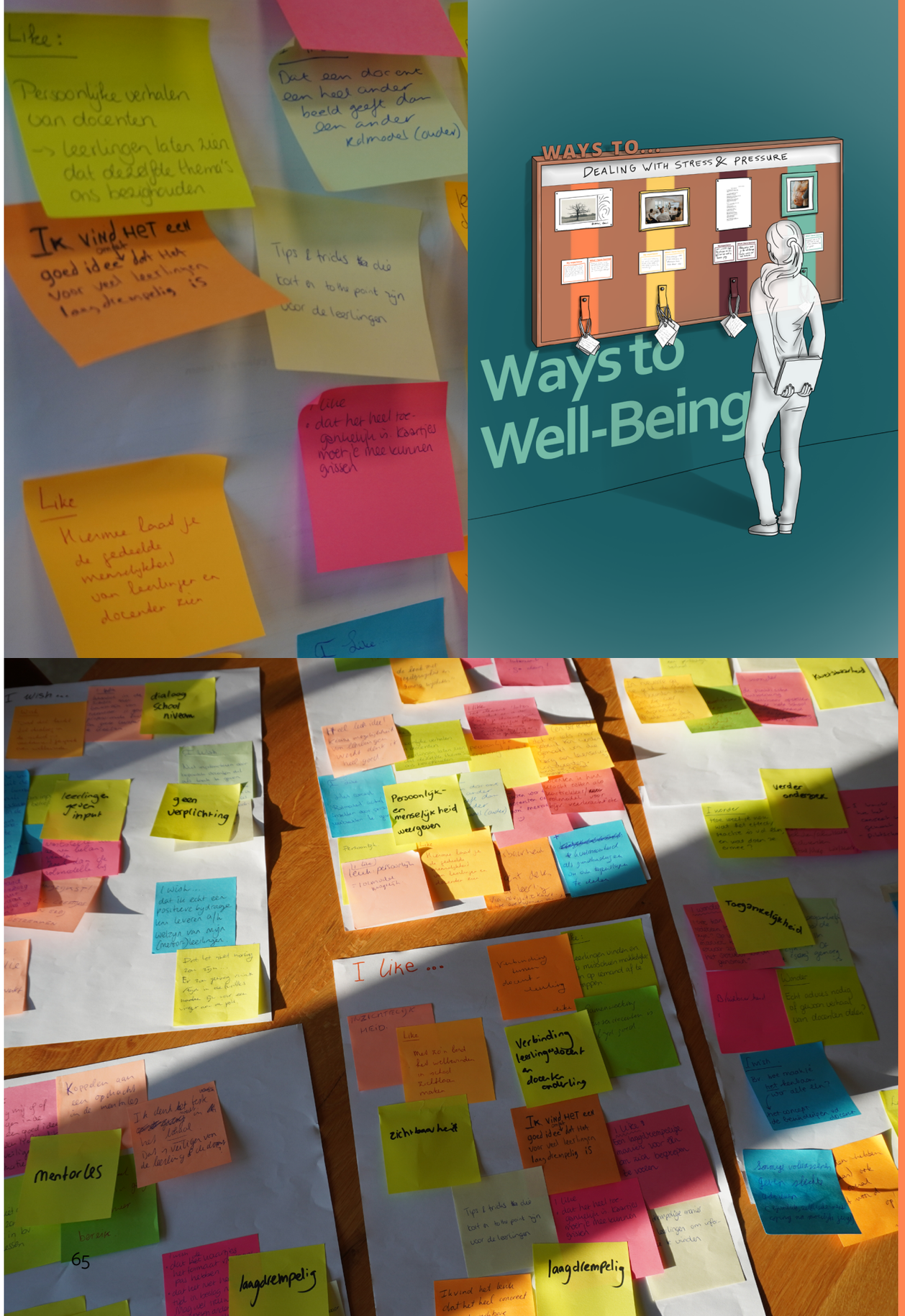
First, Healthy Start colleagues shared insights from their research and invited teachers to reflect on their experiences with well-being interventions. After that, the research insights on role models and the concept were presented. Teachers had time to ask questions and mention their comments. Then they all wrote down their likes, wishes, and wonders about the concept. They were supported by slides with guiding questions (Attachment 14) and a verbal explanation. The setup is further shown in Chapter 5.X. The collected data included sticky notes, audio recordings, field notes, and photographs of the participants and setting. All participants signed the same consent form used for the teacher interviews.

Analysis

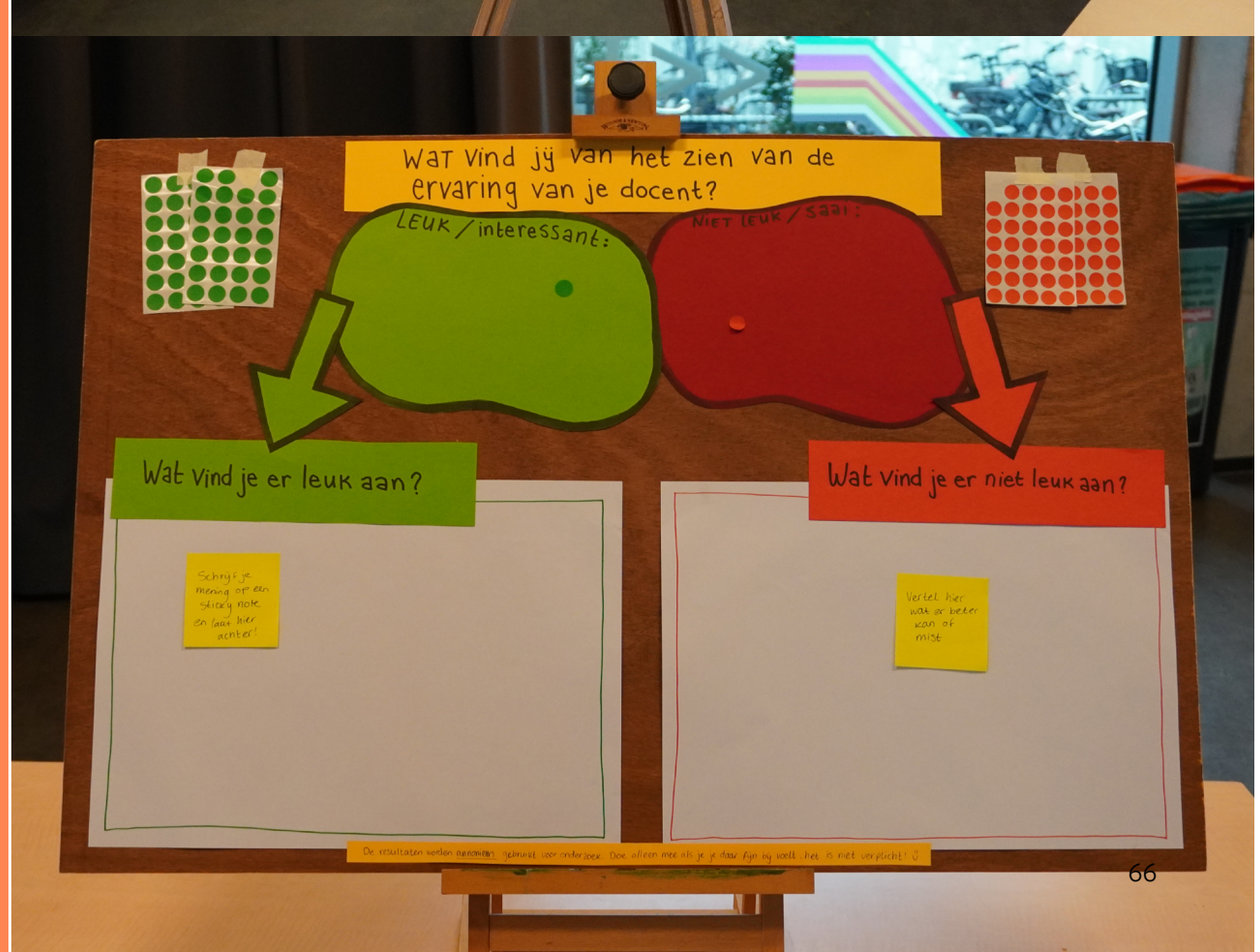
The sticky notes written by participants, which they had placed in 'likes', 'wishes' and 'wonders', were analysed through clustering them into overlapping themes, as shown on the right. Quotes have been manually transcribed from the audio recording.

Iteration

After this evaluation, some minor changes were made to the design: moving from four ways and implementing it in the hallway to showing two ways and merging the idea into the mentor class. Since this iteration was very minor, it has not been included in the report further.







Final student evaluation

Finally, an evaluation was conducted with two teachers and over 30 secondary school students of different ages and educational types, using the Interaction Prototyping and Evaluation method (Van Boeijen et al., 2013). The aim of this evaluation was to test the interaction of students with seeing their teachers' stories on the notice board, which is a smaller aspect of the solution. A prototype was created, together with two teachers from the school, who shared their personal experiences (as potential role models).

Participants and recruitment

A school care coordinator was contacted through Healthy Start's network, who in turn contacted teachers to participate in creating the prototype. A few days later, the prototype was positioned in the canteen of a secondary school for one day. Many students passed by in that canteen; an estimate is around 100 who had seen the prototype. At least 30 students have been interacting with it. 26 students were actively asked to evaluate the prototype, of whom exactly 50% were male, and 50% were female, and all had different ages and educational types.

Research questions

The interaction evaluation was guided by the following questions:

- What do students like and dislike about the concept?
- Are students drawn to their teachers' stories? Why (not)?
- Would this concept help students with their resilience, identity, or interactions?
- Which interaction qualities does the prototype conceive? How will students act and interact with the prototype, respectfully or unseriously?
- Would students like to see more stories like this from their (other) teachers? Why (not)?

Set-up and procedure

The prototype set-up in the school's canteen is shown on the top left. Since the prototype was tested in a busy, open canteen setting with a large and changing group of pupils, collecting signed consent forms from all students and their parents was not feasible; therefore, the evaluation was conducted informally through brief, voluntary conversations. Notes from these conversations were written on paper and were not linked to any student's identity. In addition, a wooden feedback board (bottom left) was provided where students could leave stickers and sticky notes. The board included a notice stating that participation was voluntary and that responses would be used anonymously for research purposes. Furthermore, no audio recordings were made, and no photographs were taken that could identify students.

Analysis

The insights from the conversations and the sticky notes on the feedback board were clustered, yielding the main interaction qualities of the final concept and recommendations for further development.

4. FIELD WORK INSIGHTS

What

The next chapter summarises the insights from the fieldwork conducted in the first phase of this project. It provides a clearer understanding of the context of Dutch secondary schools, the roles of teachers in well-being, the roles of role models, and why the three themes ‘resilience’, ‘identity’, and ‘interaction’ seem to be overlapping outcomes for teachers as role models. First, the teacher’s perspective on role modelling and well-being will be examined, then the students’ perspectives on role models and their teachers will be explored. The chapter will end with a conclusion that guides toward a design goal.

For whom

These insights are particularly useful for schools and teachers to understand what role modelling for well-being might involve and how it can be demonstrated in schools. It is also beneficial for anyone working with or engaging with youth to better understand who they regard as role models in their environment and their reasons for doing so.

4.1 TEACHER PERSPECTIVES ON ROLE MODELLING FOR YOUTH WELL-BEING

This paragraph offers insights into role modelling from the teacher's perspective, based on 13 in-depth interviews with teachers (method explained in Chapter 3.2). Teachers were asked about school well-being, their role in it, and their thoughts on role modelling. This resulted in several perspectives on their potential as role models, testing our assumptions from Chapter 2. These perspectives were grouped into three main themes: resilience, identity, and interaction. These themes will be explained through the three functions of role models defined by Morgenroth et al. (2015): behavioural model, representation of the possible, and inspiration (explained in Chapter 2.3). During the second part of the student workshops, opinions were gathered on how teachers have acted as behavioural models, representations of the possible, or sources of inspiration during students' past school years (Chapter 3.2). It confirmed the insights provided in this chapter.

Resilience

One of the teacher's roles in improving well-being, as often mentioned by teachers, is to support students' personal development and resilience. For a teacher to model resilience, they must show vulnerability and humanity. This was mentioned by approximately half of the teachers interviewed for this research. This insight aligns with our theoretical foundation, which states that role models can share personal experiences of resilience to help shift norms around well-being (Dopmeijer et al., 2023). It also taps into the well-being component 'dealing with stress and worry' identified by Green et al. (2022). Support professionals in schools, such as support coordinators or counsellors, mentioned that they sometimes refer students to a teacher who has experienced a similar situation.

'Students sense which teacher has experienced something similar. A student with an eating disorder knows which teacher to ask how they got through it, and students who self-harm know exactly who to go to as well. It is always the teacher who experienced something similar, who comes with these types of issues'

– Willemijn, school care coordinator

CONFIRMATION FROM A STUDENT

'For example, a teacher could share personal experiences by mentioning during class, when discussing a problem or something, "Oh, I've had this happen to me too, and this is how I dealt with it." It can help to put things into perspective when you hear a story that is personal.'

Resilience as a behavioural model

As behavioural models, teachers could show how to deal with setbacks, manage stress and pressure, or what to do when feeling worried. About one-third of the teachers mentioned that a role model could demonstrate concrete ways to deal with struggles. Furthermore, they can reflect certain norms about well-being: whether it is normal to take action regarding stress, whether feeling some stress is acceptable, and that it is normal to talk about how you feel and what you need. For example, a teacher could mention that they are having a difficult day or that they have not slept well to show students that this is part of everyday life.

'A role model means setting an example of how to be human.'

– Jan, teacher

'A teacher can be aware of the student's well-being in the longer term by taking an interest in them. What they bring with them, how they feel, what they need.'

- Marie, teacher and dean

CONFIRMATION FROM A STUDENT

'A teacher once mentioned that he was sleeping poorly because he had just had a baby. It was very nice of him to mention this, because it makes you more understanding towards that teacher when he is not feeling well or has not prepared a lesson as well as usual. It also teaches you that it is acceptable to mention when you have had a poor night's sleep and how to show understanding in such situations.'

Resilience as a representation of the possible

As representations of the possible, teachers could show that it is possible to get through tougher times and feel better, and that it is okay to make mistakes or not know; that does not define your worth or competence.

"As a music teacher, I also show that I can't play all instruments. This makes students think, oh, this man doesn't know everything either. And with my curiosity and enthusiasm for something I can't do yet, I hope to convey that it's okay to like something you can't do yourself yet. It's not a competition."

– Gerwin, teacher

CONFIRMATION FROM A STUDENT

'Sometimes you need the teacher to zoom out, to hear from someone else what this one grade means for the rest of your life. This helps you to see things in perspective yourself.'

Resilience as an inspiration

As inspiration, teachers could encourage students to embrace imperfections, to open up about their feelings, or to realise that no one is always very secure or confident. Inspiration can occur when a person realises something new (Morgenroth et al., 2015). It can be very helpful to realise that you are never alone in your experiences. When you are young, this is even more important, because if you have never heard anyone describe something similar, it might seem like no one in the world has ever faced what you are going through. However, as you grow older, you often realise that there is almost always someone who has gone through something similar. Being open about your experiences as a teacher can encourage students to share more vulnerable experiences as well, fostering meaningful conversations and connections.

'I think that being a role model also means communicating the human experiences we have as teachers, or simply from our own lives. (...) That you can sometimes bring your own experience into conversations, so that they think: "Oh, I'm not alone!"

– Mandy, support coordinator

'If, as a teacher, you also show that you sometimes have a hard time, that there are difficult moments, that you feel sad, or that you can bring your home situation into the classroom and say, "I'm not sure about this, I'm not feeling very well today," then students will also know that this is normal and part of life.'

– Alice, teacher

Considerations

The balance between showing vulnerability and maintaining professionalism and respect should be considered, as this was frequently mentioned in the research. Teachers want to share some things about their personal lives, but feel there needs to be boundaries. Furthermore, the classroom environment needs to be safe for the teacher to be vulnerable, meaning students need to act respectfully towards the teacher when they share something. At the same time, the teacher should not project problems onto students; that should not be the aim of a role model.

'You always have that formal role on the one hand and human characteristics on the other.'

– Jan, teacher

'The balance is, you want a bond, contact with the student, but at the same time you don't want to become their friend. Because there are times when something simply has to be done, and I don't want them saying "oh come on, Laurien, this or that". Then I need to be able to say: "and now shut up and get to work"'

– Laurien, teacher

'Show your humanity, but students don't have to bear it. You do need to remain an anchor that students can rely on, so that they can share their stories with you. I leave my worries at home.'

– Teacher present at the TRAXX performance

"It's a balancing act, because if I always say that their exams will be fine when they're not doing well, that's not fair and can actually have a negative effect. But with these students, I felt that they were stressed about passing when they really could do well, so that's what I tell them.'

– Thijs, teacher

Another consideration is the teacher's own resilience. When a teacher wants to model well-being, it is especially important that they take care of their own well-being. This was highlighted in a conversation with the Trimbos-Institute. Teachers should demonstrate resilience, relaxation, confidence, and comfort so their students feel the same. When implementing role modelling, it is important to build on what teachers already have and do that positions them as role models, according to the researchers. As teachers already experience a high level of pressure, it is better to emphasise and raise awareness of the everyday ways they already support student well-being through their example.

If a teacher has good coffee, they may have a better day, which makes them feel better and perhaps more confident. If a teacher feels skilled, they are better able to engage in conversations with students than if they find it stressful, feel insecure or are simply having a bad day.'

- School health advisor, GGD Utrecht

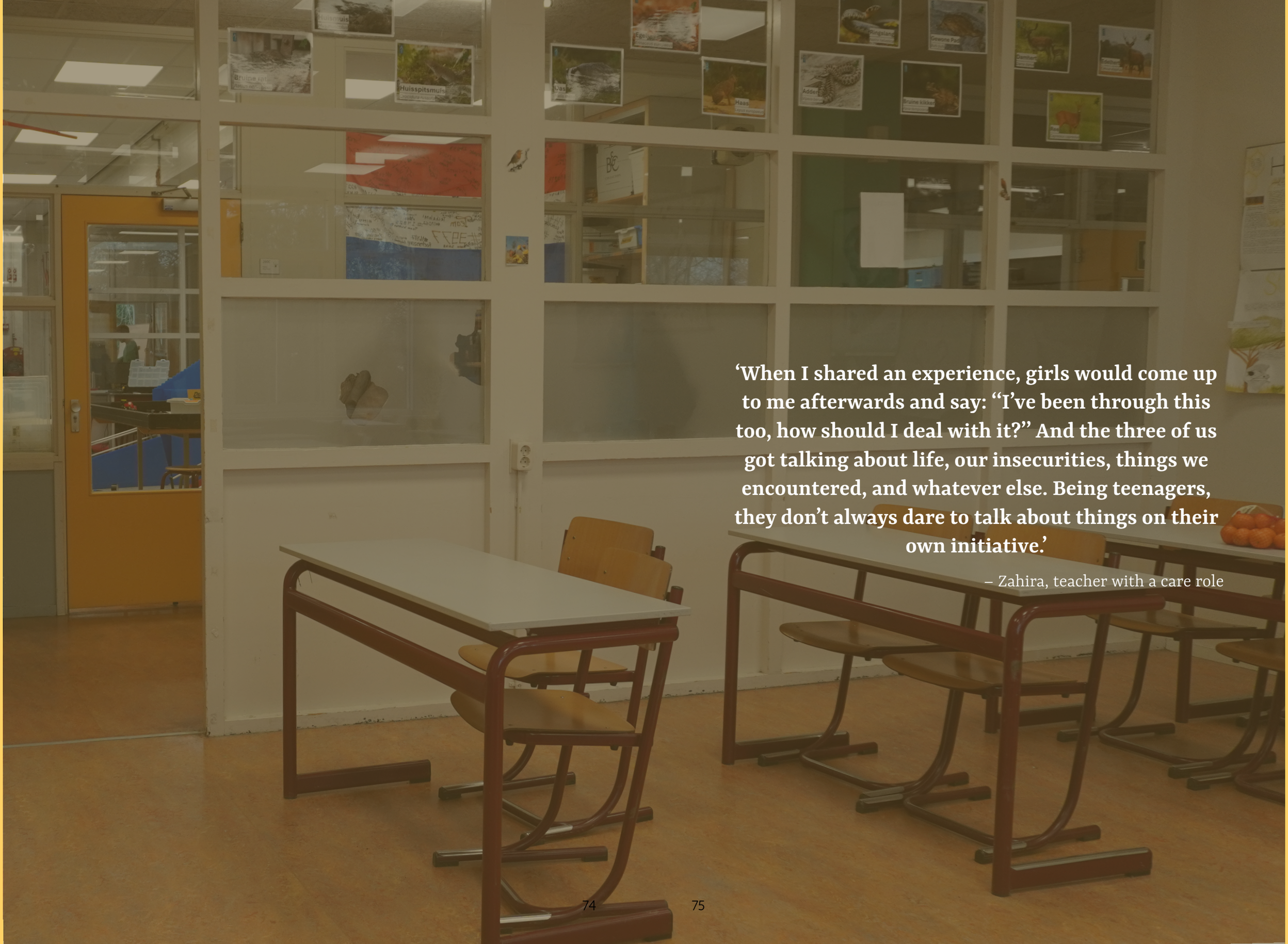
Lastly, teachers say they use their intuition to sense whether a student might have an issue, but they fear missing signals. According to them, students are very skilled at hiding how they really feel and using their language to cover things up. Therefore, it could be important that the design can help teachers with signalling problems, for example, by providing ways to open up more vulnerable conversations about well-being.

'If you don't know anything, you can't do anything. As a teacher, you therefore try to create a safe atmosphere in the classroom, and radiate the feeling that students can tell you anything.'

– Laurien, teacher

'I go by my intuition. A "rebellious" student uses a lot of non-verbal communication, which I interpret differently from most teachers.'

– Jan, teacher



‘When I shared an experience, girls would come up to me afterwards and say: “I’ve been through this too, how should I deal with it?” And the three of us got talking about life, our insecurities, things we encountered, and whatever else. Being teenagers, they don’t always dare to talk about things on their own initiative.’

– Zahira, teacher with a care role

Identity

Teachers mentioned that role models demonstrate certain identity traits. Role models can demonstrate identity by displaying characteristics and by communicating and radiating what they find important as individuals. Teachers could help students figure out what makes them happy, where their passion lies. This insight is also supported by theory, which states that role models play a significant role in shaping identity by creating a viable self-concept (Gibson, 2003). It taps into the well-being aspects of Green et al. (2022): forming identity could improve the youth's sense of impact, purpose, meaning, and self-confidence.

Identity as a behavioural model

A teacher could model their own identity to show students ways they can be or characteristics they can adopt. Moreover, it is important for a teacher to demonstrate that all students, regardless of who they are, are seen and valued. To promote well-being, it is crucial that all students feel recognised, so they know they matter and their presence is valued. This is especially important for the quieter student, who may not show themselves openly. Furthermore, a role model could show traits someone would not want to emulate, according to two teachers.

'Some students already show themselves, but it is especially important for the quieter students that you, as a teacher, indicate that they are also being seen.'

– Laurien, teacher

'And sometimes you are also a role model by being a teacher about whom students say: well, I don't want to be like that. Then you are also a role model, because they have learned that too.'

– Willemijn, school care coordinator

'We know from our own research that for students who are not doing so well at school, one teacher can make all the difference. If they feel heard and seen by one teacher, and can turn to them when something is wrong, this provides a very strong buffer for a student to be able to develop. This doesn't have to be their mentor.'

– Expert

CONFIRMATION FROM A STUDENT

'You pick up on it when a teacher is genuinely friendly and fun. Then you go into class feeling happier yourself. The behaviour is contagious.'

CONFIRMATION FROM A STUDENT

'A cheerful and positive teacher is important because it makes learning more enjoyable. It also makes you look forward to going to school. Ultimately, this has an impact on your well-being, if you are looking forward to the day at school. After all, you spend a lot of time there.'

Identity as a representation of the possible

As representations of the possible, teachers could demonstrate, through their diverse identities, that everyone is different. Furthermore, representing identity traits could show which behaviours are possible to adopt. This is especially important if students get unhealthy norms from their home environment.

'I am more of a role model in the sense of being a trusted space, a trusted person, where a student can be themselves.'

- Alice, teacher

CONFIRMATION FROM A STUDENT

'Teachers could mention what it is that you could achieve with your school diploma, to give motivation. Talk about it.'

Identity as an inspiration

By showing passion for who they are and what they do, teachers can inspire students. A few teachers mentioned this. Furthermore, showing potential hobbies, career choices, or other passions could give students a sense of what their future might look like, offering hope and a goal to work towards.

'We have a business economics teacher who worked for a multinational company in London and earned millions there. I think a lot of the students who follow that class think: oh, so it is possible, that's cool, I want to do that too. So they are also role models in inspiring what you want to do next.'

– Willemijn, school care coordinator

'I think it's very important that students see that I enjoy being here, that I take pleasure in the work I do, that I do it out of a certain passion and because I find it enjoyable and important.'

- Thijs, teacher

Considerations

Teachers mentioned that seeing all students and learning who they are can be quite challenging, as they see so many different students every day. A design could help teachers express their identity to all students.

'When you have seen 120 students in one day, it takes quite a lot of energy, and then you often still have things to do. That's why I can't have the same contact with all students as I do with my mentor students.'

– Alice, teacher

‘When you do something that is close to your heart, you always feel better, I think. That is why I want to help students discover who they are and what they need.’

– Marie, teacher and dean

Interaction

The third overlapping theme that a teacher as a role model for well-being could tap into is interaction. Almost all teachers and experts have mentioned that they can set norms through interactions with students and colleagues, both in and outside of the classroom. Again, this confirms theories, which show that student-teacher and student-student relationships are crucial to positive well-being (Bashir et al., 2014; Endedijk et al., 2021; Peeters et al., 2022). Interaction furthermore taps into the well-being component 'feeling respected, appreciated, and loved' by Green et al. (2022).

Interaction as a behavioural model

When mentioning role models, some teachers spoke about exemplifying specific behaviour, such as ways you interact in class. A behavioural model could establish norms, making well-being and caring for each other a priority, fostering a safe and positive classroom atmosphere. Students confirm: they appreciate it when a teacher shows genuine interest, for example through small talk.

'I think you are a role model in the examples you set, how you address students, how you interact with colleagues, and what you radiate.'

– Laurien, teacher

'If you have certain codes as a group, it is easier to say something about them as a group. Or simply to look out for each other.'

– Laurien, teacher

CONFIRMATION FROM A STUDENT

'If a teacher notices that a student seems less cheerful in class, they could calmly ask how they are doing. It does not have to be a very psychological conversation, but by asking, a teacher can take it into consideration if something is wrong.'

Interaction as a representation of the possible

Interaction could also represent that it is possible to act nicely and relaxed, with empathy, understanding and care towards each other. Again, this might be especially important for students who do not learn these types of interactions at home. At school, a role model could represent ways of interacting that are different from what they are used to.

'I think the most important thing, especially for a beginning teacher, is that they should not try to solve everything, but above all try to listen and acknowledge the student. I hear you, and some things don't always go the way you want them to, that happens and that's okay.'

– Thijs, teacher

CONFIRMATION FROM A STUDENT

'If a teacher offers help in a nice way, you learn how you like to receive help yourself, and that others may also like to be helped in this way, so that you can perhaps help others in turn.'

Interaction as an inspiration

Interaction qualities can be considered inspiring if they are new to students. These qualities can be fostered by teachers or by products. For example, a teacher could show students new ways to interact with one another. Similarly, a table tennis table could inspire students to start playing together.

'My short answer for improving well-being is a piano. Or a football table. But something that encourages students to do more together, to play together.'

– Gerwin, teacher

Conclusion

According to teachers, role models set an example. They show vulnerability to encourage open conversations and sharing of experiences. Furthermore, they demonstrate ways to deal with struggles, show humanity, and shape norms. Furthermore, role models could give students a sense of purpose by showing passion and career opportunities while sharing their personality. They could also show how not to be like, or what not to do. Lastly, role models can encourage positive and safe interactions.

Things to consider include the balance between being vulnerable and staying professional, supporting teachers' well-being, recognising that students do not always share things voluntarily, and the large number of students secondary school teachers see each day.

Implications for designing

For a teacher to become a role model for well-being, it is most important to keep in mind that teachers set a norm, also when it comes to setbacks, stress and pressure. For students to open up about what they experience, it requires vulnerability, and some students might need the teacher to initiate that. The insights in this chapter lead to the following requirements for the design:

- The design should show resilience, interaction or identity.
- The design should help the teacher in being vulnerable without losing respect and professionalism.
- The design should help shift norms about well-being.
- The design should foster meaningful interaction between students and teachers or among students.
- The design should take teachers' well-being into account: avoid placing excessive workload on them, and build on what teachers already have and do to position them as role models.
- The design should encourage students to share things with their teachers.
- The design should take into account that teachers have many different students every day.

Wie zijn mijn rolmodellen?

Van wie neem je gedrag of gedachten over? Naar wie kijk je op? Wie vind je inspirerend? Wie laat je zien wat er mogelijk is? Wie bewonder je?

1

Naam:

Waarom is dit een rolmodel voor mij?

Wat heb ik van deze persoon geleerd en/of overgenomen?

2

Naam:

Waarom is dit een rolmodel voor mij?

Wat heb ik van deze persoon geleerd en/of overgenomen?

3

Naam:

Waarom is dit

4.2 YOUTH PERSPECTIVE ON ROLE MODELS

To figure out what secondary school students in the Netherlands see as role models and which attributes they ascribe to them, we conducted two in-depth student sessions at two different secondary schools, speaking with 23 students from several classes. In Chapter 3.2, the full approach and procedure of the session are explained. The insights presented in this chapter are based on these sessions. First, what students associate with the word 'role model' will be explained, along with who students choose as role models. Next, the main insights into role modelling will be presented, grouped into three overlapping themes that capture what students admire in or have learned from their role models: a resilient mindset, ways of being, and ways of interacting with others.

The meaning of a role model

When discussing what a role model generally means for students, they mention that it is someone inspiring, an example, someone to look up to or admire. A role model has behaviour and feelings you can relate to, copy and learn from. For example, someone who said or did something that you have always remembered, someone with a successful career, someone who tries out new things, or someone standing for their values. In Figure 4.1, one of the collages is shown, made by a few students during a workshop, as an example of what they associate with role models.

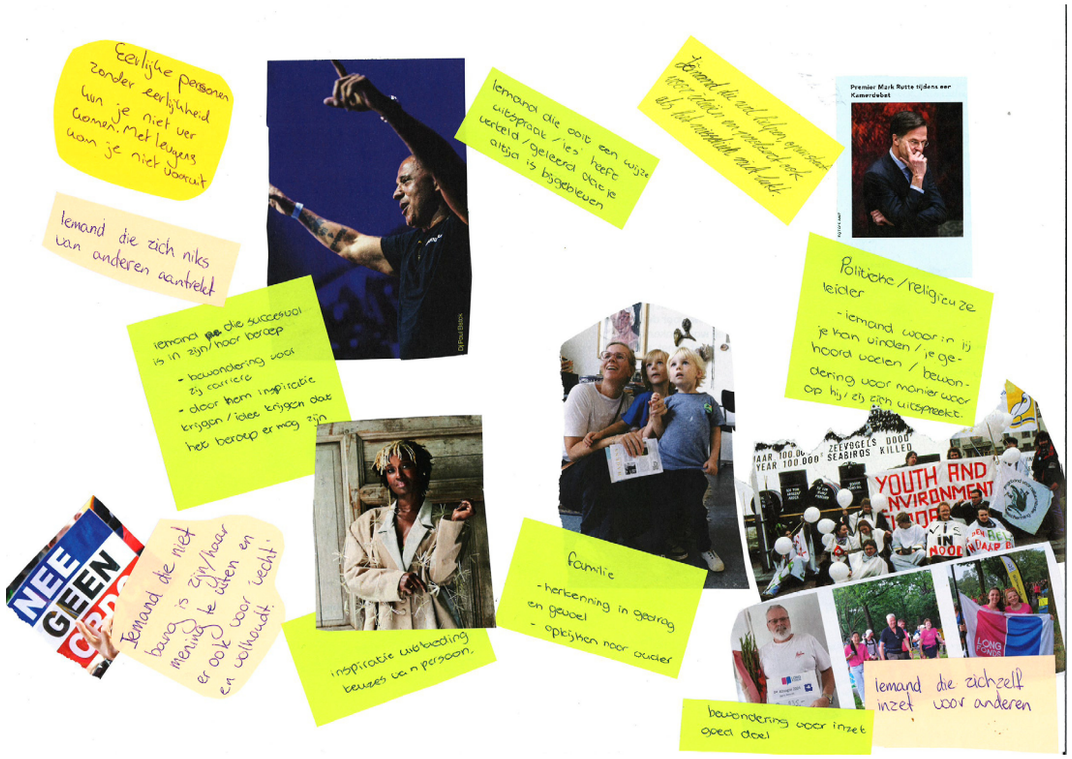


Figure 4.1: One of the student group's collages about role models

Youth's role models

The participating students have completed a template that allowed them to select up to three role models. Among the chosen role models, over 60% were family members, 15% were friends, 9% were teachers or counsellors at school, and the rest included sportspeople, singers, and politicians. This confirms what we have observed in theory and indicates that some students already regard their teachers as role models, even though most do not.

When discussing with students why most of them did not choose a teacher as a role model, they explain that teachers often teach subjects they do not always find inspiring or interesting, which makes it harder to see a teacher in that subject as their role model. Besides learning about their subject, these students do not feel they have much to do with their teachers; they do not explicitly learning behaviour, norms, or values that they aspire to.

> *'Teachers don't have a huge influence on my life. I attend classes and then have nothing more to do with them, so that's why I haven't chosen a teacher as a role model.'*
>
> – student during the student workshop

> *'I think that many people do not necessarily enjoy school very much, and teachers are associated with school, so you automatically do not see the teachers as your role models.'*
>
> – student during the student workshop

The students who chose their teachers as role models explain that these teachers have been there for them when they found school very difficult, or that they have shown them that their grades do not define their worth. Furthermore, teachers were chosen because they showed care for students, demonstrated passion in their teaching, or had a fun, positive attitude. Their quotes are integrated in the next sections.



Role models provide a resilient mindset

Students have often recognised a mindset that fosters resilience as something their role models have taught them or as something they have taken over from them. It included the following themes: keeping perspective, practising gratitude, choosing positivity, embracing mistakes as learning, staying strong and confident, doing the best you can, and balancing ambition with enjoyment. When explaining this to teachers later, they were often unaware that this mindset can also be explicitly conveyed as role models to students.

'I wasn't really aware that, as a teacher and role model, you also live by a certain mindset and show that in everything you do.'

– Bart, teacher

Keeping perspective

Role models put things in perspective. This could be as simple as showing opposite ways of being, from which students learn. Furthermore, more literal ways of putting things in perspective were mentioned.

'My grandma shows me that not everything needs to be so heavy; you don't have to take things very seriously all the time'

– Student about their role model

'My mom gives me tips or says things in a way that a big problem seems way smaller'

– Student about their role model

Practising gratitude

A few students mentioned gratitude and not taking things for granted. This often relates to tougher experiences in their role models' lives, and they learned the importance of gratitude from them.

'She taught me that it is important not to take the good things in life for granted'

– Student about their role model

'My sister taught me how to be grateful for everything we have'

– Student about their role model

Choosing positivity

Many students mentioned positivity and an optimistic view of life as lessons from role models. Furthermore, they mention that focusing on the good things in life helps them maintain a positive mindset.

'My grandpa showed me that there is always something positive to put the attention towards'

– Student about their role model

My grandma taught me to keep on smiling, because being sad doesn't get you anywhere'

– Student about their role model

Embracing mistakes as learning

This point could be especially interesting for teachers as role models, as it concerns the pressure students feel to perform in school. The teacher could play a valuable role in showing that mistakes and performance in general do not measure your worth, qualities, or success in life.

'I learned from my primary school teacher that your performance does not say anything about your qualities'

– Student about their teacher as role model

Staying strong and confident

Remarkably, many students said their role models taught them to "stay strong" and to "keep on going." They rarely described specific actions they copied, but instead showed that they took over a general mindset of continuing. This links to having faith in yourself and trusting that you will get where you should be, as well as to role models showing that it is possible to achieve certain goals despite challenges and that you can overcome them.

Students often referred to their family, who stayed strong even when tough things happened in their lives. This may also explain why teachers were less often chosen as role models: students usually do not know the challenges teachers face in their personal lives, whereas they do witness these challenges with their family, with whom they usually live. A teacher, as a role model, could thus show that they overcome challenges as well and encourage students to have faith that they will get through school, even when it can be challenging at times.

'In a time that school was really hard for me, this teacher helped me, encouraged me to continue, and gave me a lot of trust'

– Student about their secondary school teacher as a role model

'My grandma has gone through a lot, but always stayed strong nevertheless, and followed her own plan. I admire that'

– Student about their role model

Doing the best you can

Role models show that you have to give your all if you want to reach a goal, and at the same time show that you cannot do more than your best. This shows the important balance of encouragement and trust that things will work out for the best. This is something a teacher could directly convey in the classroom as well.

'Cristiano Ronaldo shows me how he always goes for it for 100%'

– Student about their role model

'My mom taught me that nothing is impossible if you believe in it and do the best you can'

– Student about their role model



‘My friend has problems with her well-being herself, and she shows me that she manages to get through it every time’

– Student about their role model

Balancing Ambition with Enjoyment

Several students mentioned that their role models taught them that working hard can get you very far, but that the balance between working and doing fun things is also important. That staying nice and helping others is very important, even though you work hard for your own goals. As teachers, having fun and showing passion seem to be the most important for students. This aligns with our earlier findings.

> *'He always has fun while teaching, so he teaches me to also always have fun and be patient'*
>
> – Student about their secondary school teacher as a role model

> *She shows a lot of passion in her teaching, and always wants to improve herself'*
>
> – Student about their secondary school teacher as a role model

Role models show a way of being

The second overlapping theme is that role models seem to show students a way of being. They inspire students about who they can be and whom they may become, and introduce them to new interests or characteristics they can adopt. This relates greatly to the insecurity that is common and the search for identity often undertaken in this age group, as highlighted in the Chapter about well-being earlier. The three subthemes are: being yourself, exploring new interests, and adopting characteristics.

Being yourself

Role models show students they can be themselves. On the one hand, role models make students feel they can be themselves by making them feel safe around them, but students also learn from role models how to trust and stand up for themselves. As a teacher, it is therefore important to stay true to yourself and show your identity, so that students learn that there are unlimited ways of being and that everyone has unique characteristics.

> *'With my best friend, I can talk about everything: lighter and deeper conversations. I can always be myself'*
>
> – Student about their role model

> *'Everyone belongs, no matter who you are'*
>
> – Student about their role model

Exploring new interests

Role models can inspire students to pursue new interests, hobbies, or jobs. Especially in secondary schools, where students have to decide their career paths, this could be important. Furthermore, it could help students find their sense of purpose, something they struggle with and which affects their well-being, as shown in Chapter 3.2. As teachers, it could therefore be beneficial to show their own interests outside of their jobs in school.

> *'My dad had a dream, and I have the same dream'*
>
> – Student about their role model

> *'My friend has inspired me to take over improvised writing and role play'*
>
> – Student about their role model

Adopting characteristics

Students mention their role models' characteristics as qualities they (try to) adopt. They furthermore recognise their own characteristics in their role models. One student mentioned that their teacher is their role model because he is always nice. This shows the importance of showcasing these positive characteristics as a teacher.

> *'He is somehow the opposite of how I am, and I can learn from that'*
>
> – Student about their role model

> *'My role model shows being authentic, respectful, calm and full of passion'*
>
> – Student about their role model

Role models show ways to interact with others

The third recurring theme concerns interaction with others. Many students have mentioned qualities like helpfulness as traits they have adopted or admired from their role models. This aligns with the sociology insights we discussed earlier, which demonstrated that people tend to imitate the behaviour of others in the same social environment. Interacting with others includes the following themes: helping and caring for others, treating others with respect, and communicating with others.

Helping and caring for others

This was one of the most frequently chosen learnings/admires from role models, and teachers have been mentioned the most in this category as well. Parents have often been chosen by students because of their great care, which has inspired them to want to be the same. Helping others, especially in times of hardship or busyness, has been mentioned often. Helping others could potentially improve students' sense of purpose.

> *'My teacher is always there for his students; he is always happy and truly cares for how his students are doing. I learned from him to have passion for helping other people'*
>
> – Student about their secondary school teacher as a role model

> *'My teacher provided help when I didn't know I needed it. They taught me that there is always someone who wants to help you, and that people are grateful for your help, even if they don't say it.'*
>
> – Student about their secondary school teacher as a role model

Treating others

Role models could also show ways to treat others, for example how to treat others equally and with respect. This was, however, not mentioned very often.

'My mom taught me that you have to treat others the way you want to be treated yourself'

– Student about their role model

'My grandpa shows me that I have to treat everyone equally.'

– Student about their role model

Communicating with others

Several students mentioned that their role models taught them how to communicate with others. For example, talking, being open, and listening help to understand each other better. Being sincere can be difficult, but it could be modelled by role models. This is also useful in the class context, where often feedback needs to be given, and openness can enhance empathy and understanding. Students could learn additional ways to communicate with others from their teachers.

'My mom always honestly and sincerely says if something bothers her. That is something I find difficult.'

– Student about their role model

'My sister taught me to let others finish speaking, because otherwise you will never really know what they think or how they really feel.'

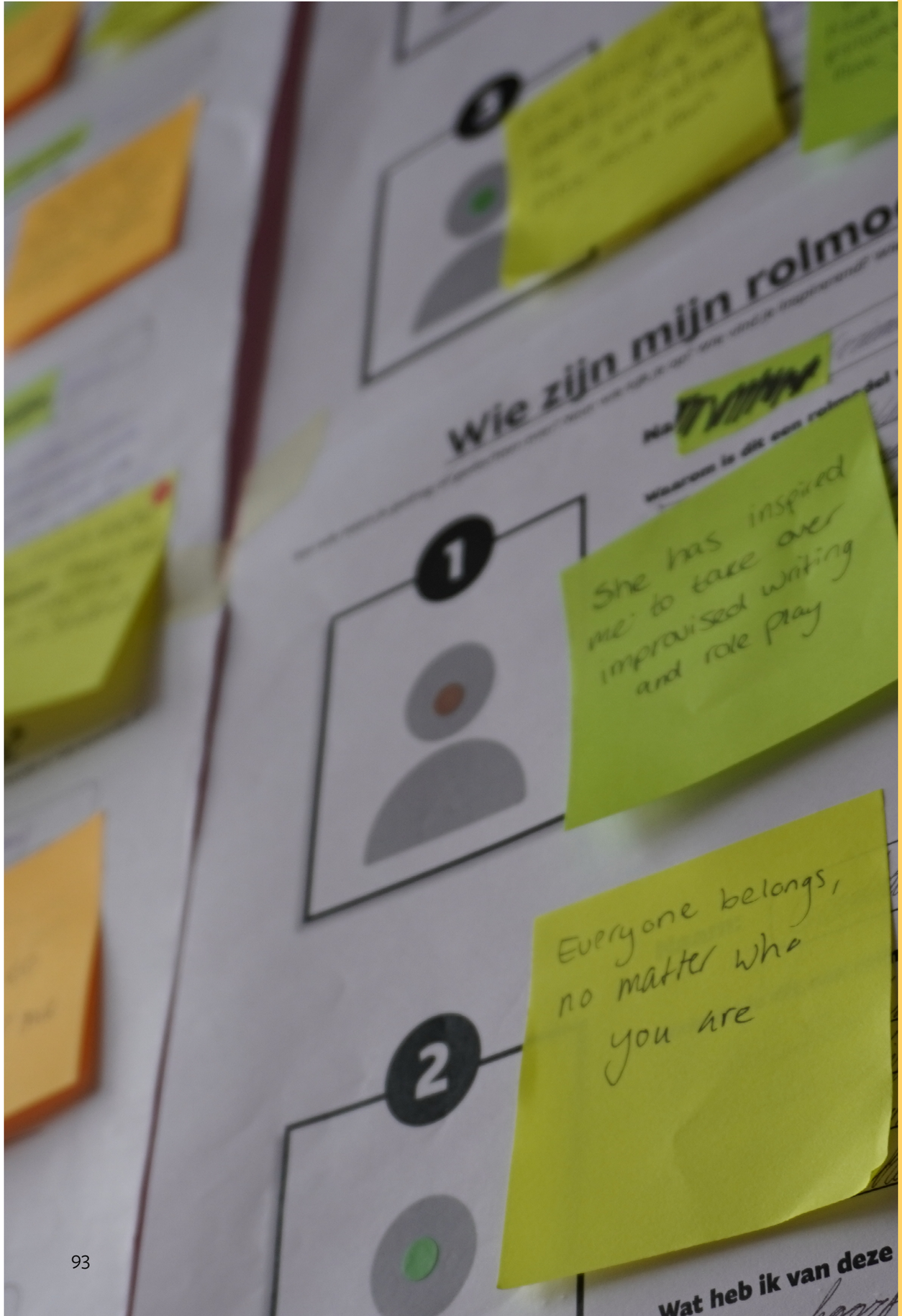
– Student about their role model

Conclusion

According to students, role models are people they admire, look up to, and learn from. They often select family members as role models. Students tend not to choose their teachers because they associate them with the subjects they teach and with school in general, which are often not particularly interesting to them. Conversely, students do not choose their current role models based on career ambitions or specific interests, but rather to reflect a general mindset that fosters resilience, to embody certain ways of being, and to demonstrate methods of interacting with others. This highlights the potential of teachers as role models for well-being, as they can showcase their own resilient mindset, identity, and ways of engaging with others, especially for students who do not have strong family role models. The insights align well with both the previous paragraph and the theories.

Implications for designing

To help teachers be perceived as role models, they could communicate a resilient mindset, a way of being, and a way of interacting with others more explicitly and intentionally, and share more of their lives outside of school. This mainly confirms the earlier findings.

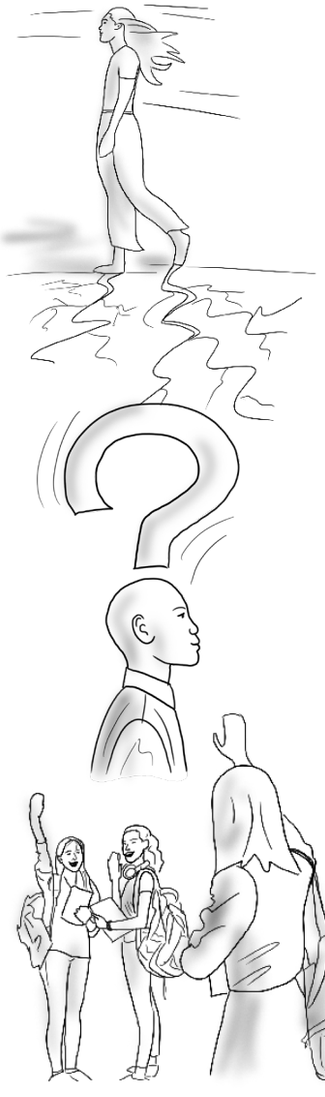


4.3 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the three assumptions derived from the theoretical background have been examined through 13 in-depth teacher interviews and three elaborate student sessions. The assumptions were as follows:

- The theories presented in Chapter 2 are applicable to the Dutch secondary school context.
- Teachers see potential in serving as role models for well-being.
- Students can learn resilience from their teachers, who serve as role models for well-being in this explicit and intentional manner.

These assumptions have been confirmed. Furthermore, the meaning of role modelling well-being as a teacher has been clarified. Teachers can showcase three key themes to benefit students and enhance the likelihood that they are recognised as role models: resilience, identity, and interaction. Below, they are summarised once again.



Resilience

Resilience brings together the aspects most directly related to well-being. Modelling resilience could help students deal with stress and worry, manage expectations in and out of school, and improve their personal development. It involves cultivating a mindset and requires vulnerability. A teacher could, for example, show positivity, motivation, perseverance, or help put things into perspective.

Identity

If a teacher models identity, they could show students ways of being, potential purposes and meanings in life, and help them discover their interests and passions. It also taps into self-confidence: if the teacher models their unique identity, it encourages students to be more confident in being themselves. It shows the differences between people, which could make students feel related. If a teacher models identity and thereby emphasises that everyone has their own strengths, it could also enhance the needs of autonomy and competence. For example, a teacher could show patience, understanding or an enthusiastic attitude as important character traits to develop.

Interaction

Modelling interaction is important for well-being because it can enhance bonds between students and teachers, and among students. This taps into their feeling of being respected, appreciated and loved, and their need of relatedness. Furthermore, youth mention to learn ways of interacting with others from their current role models. Interaction concerns the norms for treating others and can set an example of ways to form connections. A teacher could, for example, show how to support each other or model ways to show genuine interest and engage in small talk.

Design goal

We framed the design challenge in three parts: (1) to make teachers aware of their potential as role models, so to get them familiar with the role model functions and according behaviour, (2) to create tools for the teacher to actually being able to implement the role model theories explicitly and intentionally, and (3) to get students to see their teachers as role models, so to make the behaviour of the teacher attainable, desirable and significant for students.

Challenge 1 can be addressed by providing teachers with insights from this chapter. Challenge 3 will occur if multiple teachers with different resilient strategies, identities, and interaction styles apply these insights. So, it is mainly challenge 2 that needs to be addressed to develop an appropriate solution. Therefore, the design goal is outlined as follows:

The design goal is to create a tool for teachers to intentionally and explicitly showcase their unique resilience, identity, and/or interactions, to act as a behavioural model, a representation of the possible, or inspiration for their students.

This design goal will lead the ideation and concept development phase.


Voorbeelden:
Waarom is dit voor jou een rolmodel?
Welke eigenschappen heeft deze persoon?
Wat neem je van diegene over of leer je van diegene?
Ouder/verzorger
Broer/zus/neef/nicht
Opa/oma/oom/tante
Vriend/vriendin
Klasgenoot
Docent/mentor
Atleet/ bekende sporter
Trainer / coach
Social media influencer
Acteur/actrice
Religieus leider
Politiek leider
Zanger/zangeres/muzikant
Wetenschapper
Ondernemer
Activist
Promethean
BUNDESREPUBLIK DEUTSCHLAND, politisch



5. EXPLORING SOLUTIONS

What

After defining the problem and setting the design goal, many ideas and solutions were explored and elaborately evaluated with teachers and experts. In this chapter, we will present the outcomes of this ideation and assessment. These insights shaped the recommended solution and informed the development of the final concept.

For whom

These insights are particularly useful for designers and stakeholders working on well-being interventions in schools, as they provide the values and challenges of implementing them.

5.1 EXISTING INITIATIVES

This paragraph outlines current interventions and initiatives, and identifies meaningful gaps or opportunities within them that could support teachers as role models.

Well-being interventions

In a conversation with two researchers at the Trimbos Institute, a Dutch public health institute focused on mental health and addiction, it became clear what current well-being research and school-based interventions aim to achieve. There is a focus on policy-making, professional training, signalling, collaboration between schools and students' environments, and concrete educational interventions for teachers to use. Their collaborations often occur at the management level to provide the right research insights and tools for schools and, eventually, to set a solid foundation for teachers. For example, they are providing training based on the outcomes of their research.

Furthermore, several initiatives are currently implemented and used in schools. They have been explored and used as inspiration. An example is 'Psychologie in het onderwijs', a program aimed at providing lessons on thoughts, feelings and behaviours related to well-being at Ducth schools. They offer programs for students and workshops for teachers and parents (Psychologie in het Onderwijs, 2026).

'In Psychologie voor Onderwijs, they cover a different topic related to well-being each month. It's not set in stone how you have to work with it as a teacher, so you can still do it your own way, but it is a guideline if you find it difficult to start conversations about these topics.'

– Patricia, suitable education counsellor

Role models for youth well-being

During the project, two initiatives were particularly interesting with regard to role modelling for well-being: the tool 'de Checkers' and theatre shows in schools.

De Checkers by MIND US

This online tool allows anyone to practise assisting someone who is not feeling well by signalling, being a conversation partner, and providing help, through three modules and exercises. It is designed for anyone around youth, to raise awareness of their supportive role and to boost their confidence in their ability to help (MIND US, n.d.).

Theatre and workshops by Stiching Kikid

This foundation is providing life lessons to youth, through interactive theatre, workshops, projects and lessons. It is made by youth, for youth, and provides students with close role models and a structured moment that they can talk about well-being. The youth who provide the workshops and theatre are trained for helping youth when issues arise in their lessons (Kikid, 2025).

Other inspirational projects

Several other inspirational projects were uncovered and served as sources of inspiration during the ideation stage. They were discovered during conversations throughout the project, or with the help of AI.

Blijtanken

Blijtanken is a gas station for compliments, uplifiting advice and life lessons. It is used as conversation starter and aims to spread hapiness and forster connections (Even Blijtanken, n.d.).

Compliment machine

The compliment machine dispenses messages that encourage primary school students, with texts such as 'good job' and 'keep on going'. They help to reward good behaviour, could prevent bullying and have several other positive effects (Joca, 2025).

Motivation motor

The Motivation Motor is a tool for teachers to reflect on the ways they motivate students. It is aimed to help teachers in their approach to motivate students (Raaijmakers, 2020).

Post Secret

In Post Secret, Frank Warren has collected millions of postcards bearing people's secrets. All the cards feature messages from individuals sharing things they have never revealed before. He has encouraged people to be concise, legible, and creative, making each card an individual work of art (Warren, n.d.).

Listening Booth

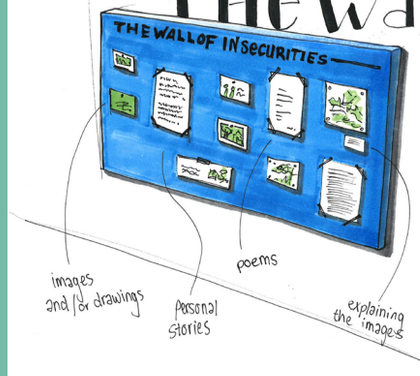
This is as simple as two chairs in a park, where a complete stranger is offering a listening ear for another persons' story. It shows the positive effect of being able to share something, and being listened to (Lentine, 2025).

Before I Die – Candy Chang

This participatory public art project invites the public to reflect on mortality and things they want to do before they die (Chang, 2025).

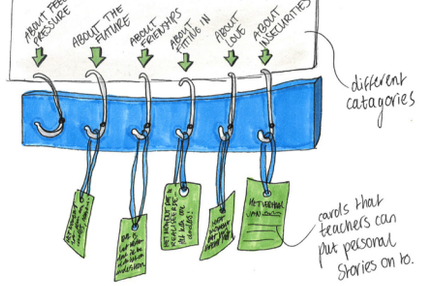


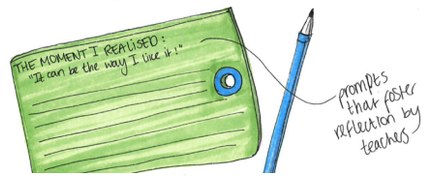
The wall of insecurities



HOW IT WORKS:

1. One or a few teachers are chosen to fill the wall of insecurities once every while.
2. They gather images, stories, inspirations, etc. related to these insecurities, and stick this on the wall.
3. Students and teachers can walk by and look at what the others have written.
4. people can add their thoughts and tips or related experiences.
5. This wall can also be filled as a class activity, together with the teacher.



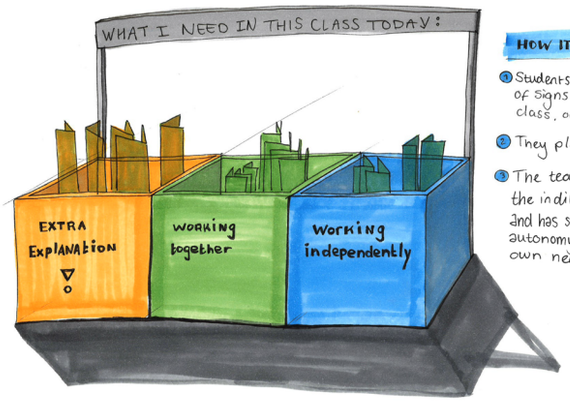


HOW IT WORKS:

1. The teacher reflects on each topic, about a realization moment that helped them with changing a negative mindset through a realization, into something positive.
2. They write about this on the template card.
3. They hang the card on the 'coat rac
4. Students who come in class can take a look at the teachers' stories
5. The cards can also act as conversatio starters.

HOST

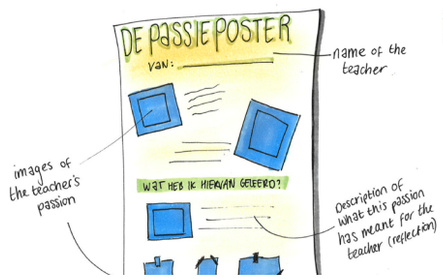
THE NEED BASKET



HOW IT WORKS:

1. Students pick one of the colours of signs from the beginning of class, or after explanation.
2. They place it on their table.
3. The teacher now knows better the individual needs of students and has set the example on providing autonomy and coming up for your own needs.

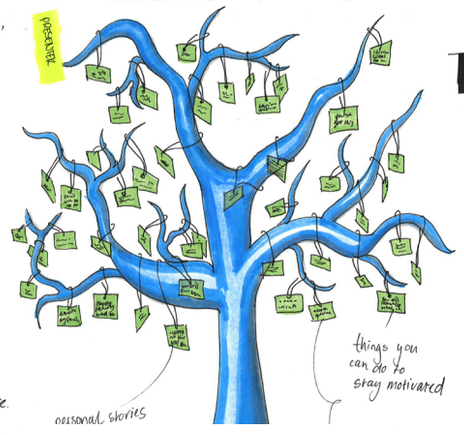
The passion poster



HOW IT WORKS:

1. Teachers receive a poster to fill out.
2. They choose a passion outside of the course they give, and write on the poster about this.
3. They stick images on to make it visual.
4. They hang the poster in the classroom
5. Students can get to know a bit of the teacher besides the given course.

POSTCARD

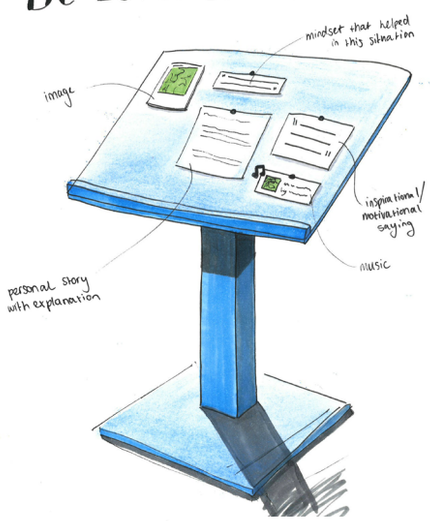


THE MOTIVATIO TREE

HOW IT WORKS

1. Teachers reflect on things that make them feel motivated. It can also be done with students.
2. They write this on small papers, and put them in the Motivation Tree.
3. The tree is placed in a classroom or hallway.
4. Students walk by and can pick a motivation "leaf" if they feel that they need it

De Levenslessenaar



HOW IT WORKS:

1. Reflect on a thing in life or a moment that you felt insecure, down or stressed.
2. Take a polaroid photo of something that represents that moment or thing. You can also find music, a poem, an article, a movie or saying, or anything else you find interesting and which has something to do with the topic. Collect it.
3. Write an explanation of why you chose these objects/images/texts
4. Place it on the "Levenslessenaar" to showcase it to students. Either anonimously or with your name.
5. Next month, someone else provides the lessons on the levenslessenaar.

The Motivation machine

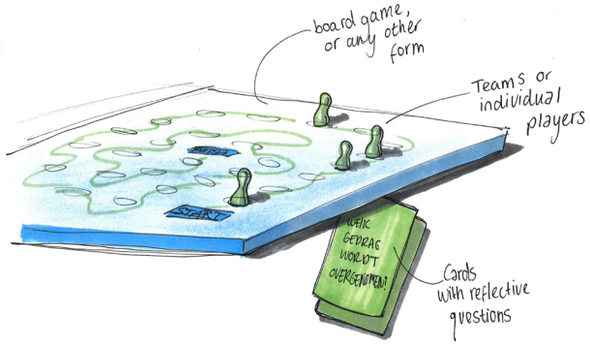


HOW IT WORKS:

1. Teachers write motivational quotes and stories on small pieces of paper.
2. They fold it and place it in a little ball.
3. The balls are put into the machine.
4. Students can take a ball out of the machine when they need a bit of encouragement/motivation.

THE ROLE MODEL GAME

FOR TEACHER TEAMS



HOW IT WORKS:

1. This game is provided to teams of teachers, potentially on a study day for teachers.
2. By playing the game, the teachers have to reflect on how they think they are a role model.
3. The game includes provocative questions for reflection and information.
4. The teachers start thinking more about their function as role model and can apply it in their upcoming classes.

HOST

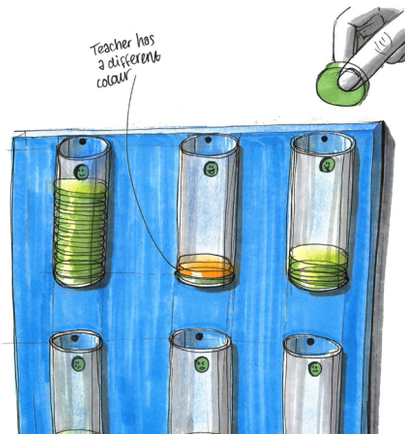
THE EMOTION CLOCK



HOW IT WORKS:

1. Before the day starts, or before each class, the teacher takes a moment to reflect on their emotion.
2. They turn the clock hand to the corresponding emotion.
3. When students come in, they see that a teacher is not always feeling positive, and they can talk about it. Or a teacher is feeling good, and they

THE Emotion METER



HOW IT WORKS:

1. The emotion meter is put up at the door of a classroom.
2. Students grab a coin when they come in, and put it in the tube representing their mood
3. The teacher also puts in their mood.
4. Now, the teacher and class have an overview of how general everyone is feeling. If there is a day where way more people feel sad teachers can talk about the moods

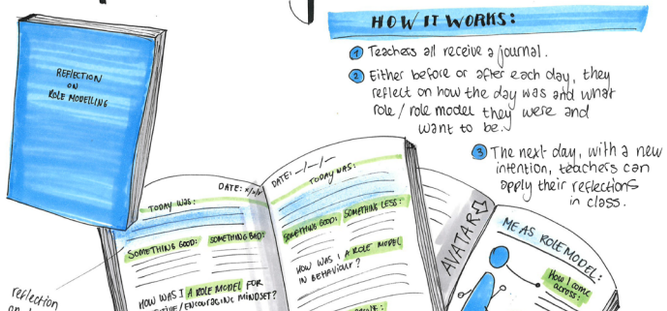
BLANKETS OF EXTRA CARE



HOW IT WORKS:

1. Teachers put the basket in their classroom
2. Students come in class, and take a blanket if they need to.
3. There are only a few, so students need to keep blankets for those who really need it

Reflective journal



HOW IT WORKS:

1. Teachers all receive a journal.
2. Either before or after each day, they reflect on how the day was and what role/role model they were and want to be.
3. The next day, with a new intention, teachers can apply their reflections in class.

5.2 EVALUATION OF IDEAS

After defining the design goal, over 100 small ideas were explored (Chapter 3.3). They were combined into 14 more detailed idea directions, shown in Chapter 3.4, on the previous page and in Attachment 11. The 14 ideas were discussed and evaluated with a teacher, stakeholders, and supervisors, as explained in Chapter 3.4. The ideas were ranked and combined. The insights of the most promising idea directions are summarised here, divided into the values and challenges that emerged accordingly. In Attachment 16, all the ideas and their detailed evaluations are provided.

Values

The values arising from the idea evaluations highlight the importance of the solution in initiating conversations, conveying personalised well-being values, and engaging students. It should be straightforward to implement, and the material and size must be suitable for the classroom. These points will next be discussed further.

Conversation Starter

The Emotion Meter was the highest-ranked concept by this teacher. Positive aspects of this concept include the ability of this product to have a low-key conversation and a quick check-in with students about how they are doing. When discussing other ideas, the teacher also highlighted the importance of the conversation starting element.

> *'I think this sets an example, and I also think it helps you as a teacher to become more aware of how the class is doing. And it doesn't take much time at all; in fact, it might be nice that you can do it quickly without everyone seeing how you are doing.'*
>
> – Bart, teacher about the Emotion Meter

Conveying well-being values

Having students reflect on their emotions or mood shows that how they are doing matters, which the teacher found to be an important value to convey as a school.

> *'If you hang this in your classroom, at the entrance or something, you immediately convey that it matters how you feel as a student, because we consider that a prerequisite for teaching at all.'*
>
> – Bart, teacher about the Emotion Meter

Easy implementation

The Wall of Insecurities ranked second, in part because the solution is very easy to implement. There are already notice boards hanging on school walls, on which certain role model themes could be made explicit easily. Through a few other ideas, this value also became apparent.

> *'I think this is a good example because it is so easy to implement. It's basically, well, why not?'*
>
> - Bart, teacher about the Wall of Insecurities

Personalization

The teacher highlighted that it would be beneficial to tailor well-being topics to the issues of a specific group of students. This could make the teachers' advice or modelled behaviour more helpful and relevant. Furthermore, the teacher liked that some ideas involved sharing something personal from the teacher with the students.

> *'Problems can vary considerably from group to group, and this idea allows you to tailor the advice to the problems of the students. So that they don't get these comprehensive life lessons, but something really tailored to their lives.'*
>
> - Bart, teacher about the Coat Rack

Involving students

Some ideas focused more on the teacher and did not involve students directly. The teacher highlighted the value of students being involved in the solution directly, to foster interaction and ensure it is beneficial for them.

> *'I feel that this idea overemphasises my feelings as a teacher, makes them too important. Suppose something very traumatic had happened. I believe it is part of my professionalism to remain impartial and teach with the same attitude you would expect if I were completely happy with how I feel.'*
>
> – Bart, teacher about The Emotion Clock

Material and size

The teacher mentioned that the quality of the material must be high for students to see the value in the product. For example, when advice is written on thin, folded paper, students are more likely to throw it away than when it is written on thicker paper with a textile lace. Furthermore, if the product is placed in a classroom, it should look professional and a bit serious, not be too big, and not draw too much attention.

> *'When I see a vending machine, I imagine something that you throw away immediately, whereas with the tree, it feels more like something you keep or give back.'*
>
> – Bart, teacher, about the Motivation Machine

Challenges

The evaluation also resulted in some challenges, which are explained below.

Vulnerability

Although showing vulnerability as a teacher can set a good example and encourage students to share their experiences, teachers also highlighted risks, such as bullying. A safe school and classroom environment should be in place when a vulnerable element is added to the design. Students are also vulnerable when they must walk to a very specific well-being product or place, as others may see them going there and say something about that. The product should therefore be implemented in a location where students are already present.

> *'If students start taking photos of that board and it contains very personal information, this could also encourage bullying. So, there should be no coercive element to it, and the school environment must be safe enough.'*
>
> - Bart, teacher, about the Wall of Insecurities

Changing classrooms

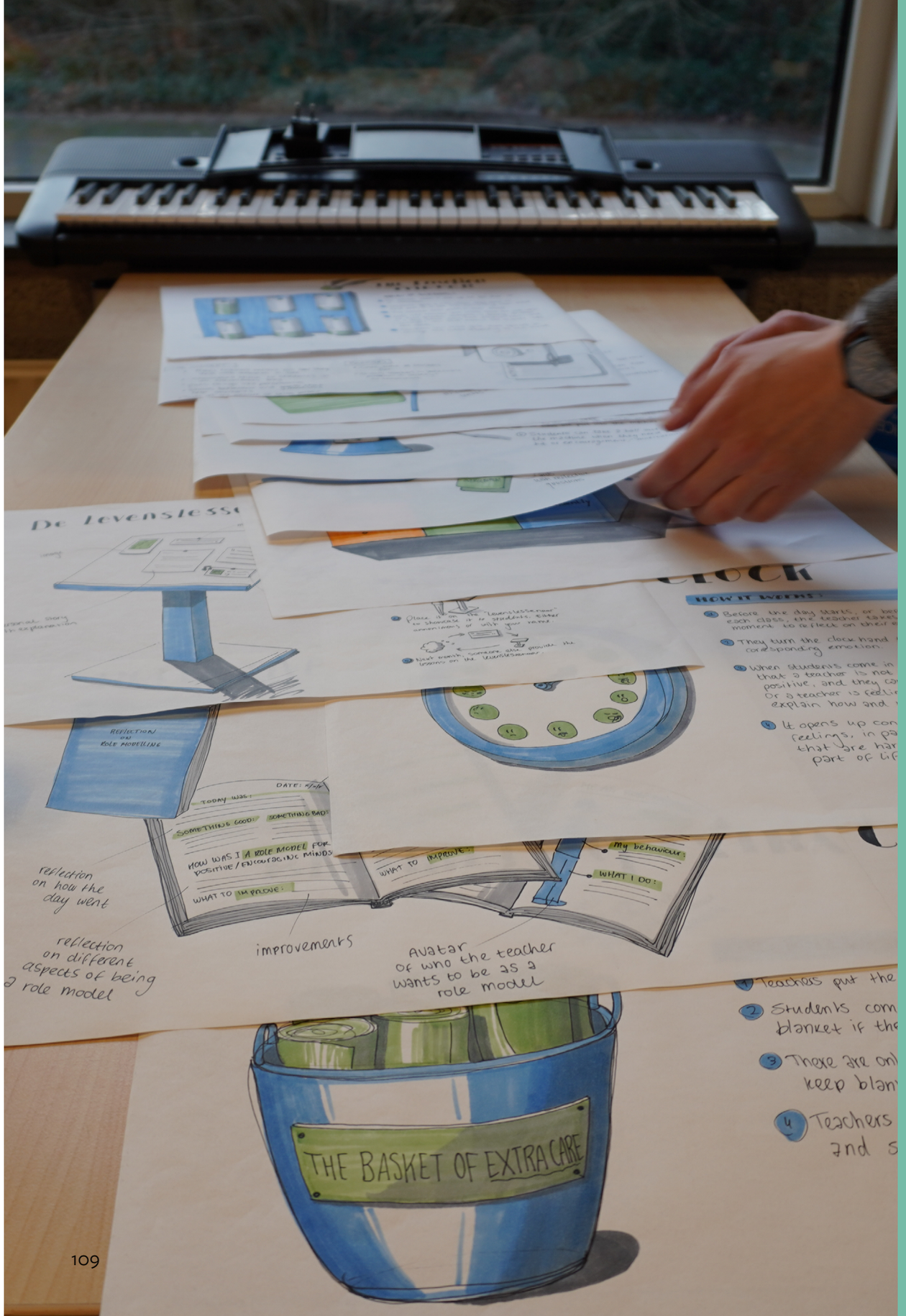
The teacher mentioned that many teachers do not have a fixed classroom they teach in, so a solution should take that into account.

> *'However, in many classrooms, lessons are taught by a wide variety of teachers, so I think it would be more difficult to implement in many other classrooms.'*
>
> – Bart, teacher about the Coat

Time

Time has been mentioned in teacher interviews and has once again emerged as a limiting factor for teachers implementing certain initiatives.

> *'My immediate thought is: nice idea, but no one will do it. Because everyone is already so busy. Unless you introduce it on a study day, where the whole day is devoted to this topic and you then play a number of these games with a supervisor present.'*
>
> – Bart, teacher about the Role Model Game





‘If you think that conversations about well-being among students should be easier, this is an ideal way to give the right example yourself.’

– Bart, teacher, about the Wall of Insecurities

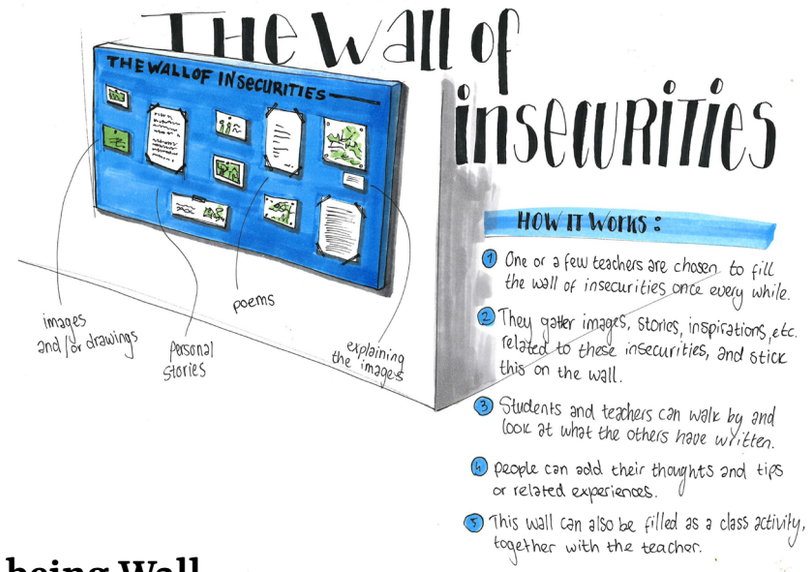
5.3 CONCEPT DIRECTIONS AND EVALUATION

After evaluating the 14 ideas, three concept directions emerged. All requirements derived from the idea evaluation and the research phase were included. The concepts are briefly discussed below and elaborated upon in Attachment 17. All concepts tap into the design goal: a tool for teachers to intentionally and explicitly showcase their unique resilience, identity, and/or interactions, to act as a behavioural model, a representation of the possible, or inspiration for their students.

The concepts were evaluated in a focus group with the care team at a secondary school, comprising three participants, of whom one was also a teacher and one a former teacher (full method in Chapter 3.4). For this evaluation, low-fidelity prototypes were used next to the design drawings, as shown in Figure 5.1. Next, each of the concepts will be discussed, as well as the resulting considerations for the final design.



Figure 5.1: Low-fidelity prototypes



Well-being Wall

The Well-being Wall will display a teacher's experience on specific well-being topics. It will highlight their resilience and aspects of their identity more explicitly and intentionally. First, teachers need to reflect on a moment in their lives when their well-being declined. Then, they write about this experience, select a visual or artistic element related to it, and consider what helped them get through that moment. This is attached to the wall to showcase to students, so they can more explicitly see their teachers as behavioural models, representations of the possible or inspirations. For example, by seeing their teachers' ways of dealing with stress/insecurities, life lessons, motivational insights, or passion, students can put things into perspective and gain practical tips for the future.

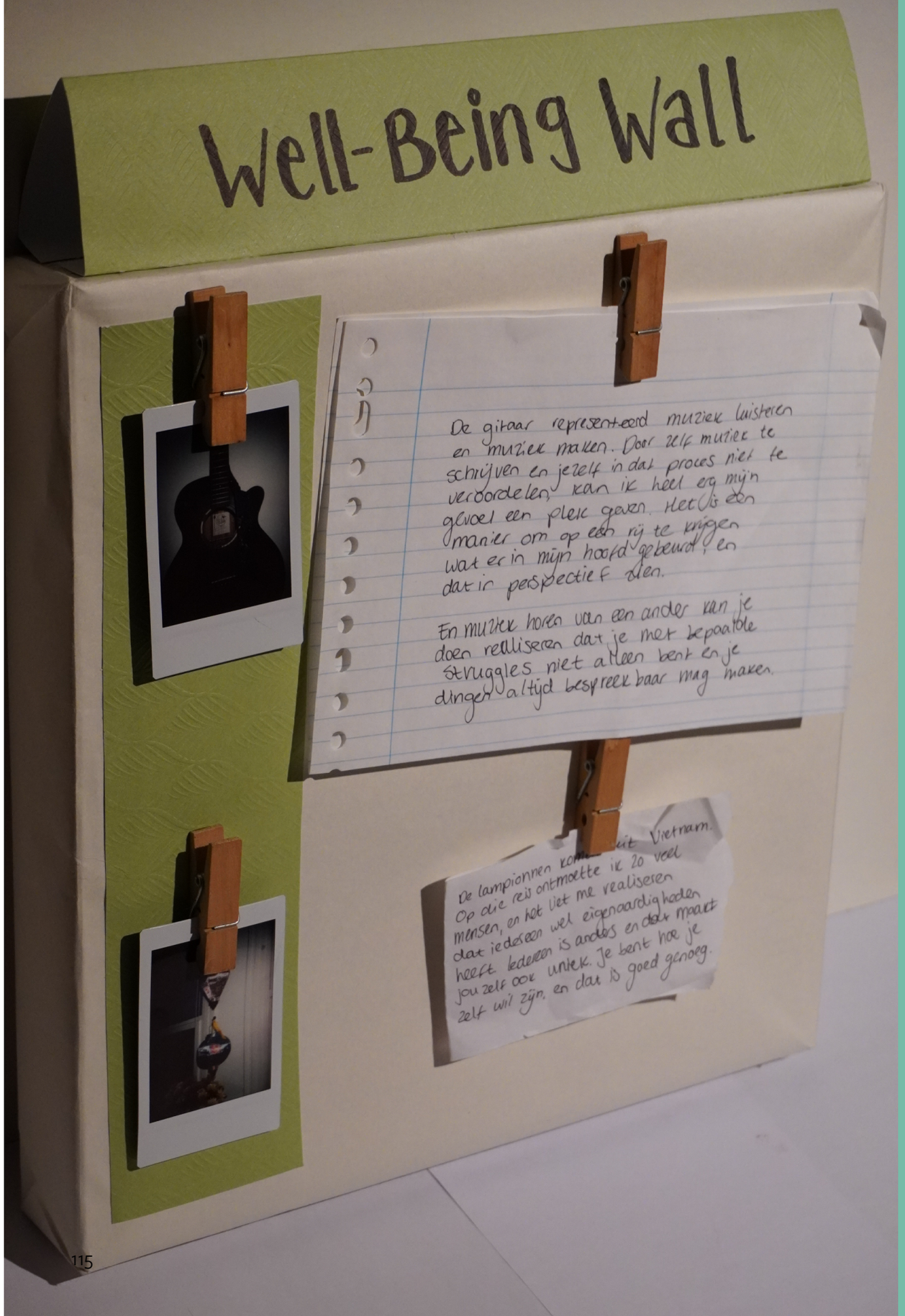
The participants in the focus group appreciated that this concept makes the teacher more human towards students and fosters openness, sharing, and inspiration. They would like the images on the wall to express emotions. Additionally, teachers noted that insecurities might be too vulnerable for students to share, so it is good that teachers take the lead. The concept should be introduced at an older age level. Furthermore, they raised questions about which types of insecurities and well-being aspects should be shared and how this concept can be applied in different classrooms. This should be emphasised during the implementation of the idea. The teachers also believed that the concept should be best introduced in a mentor class as a project.

'I think the older students are much more interested in what the teacher has to say, because the younger ones are only concerned with themselves. They don't have the space for that yet.'

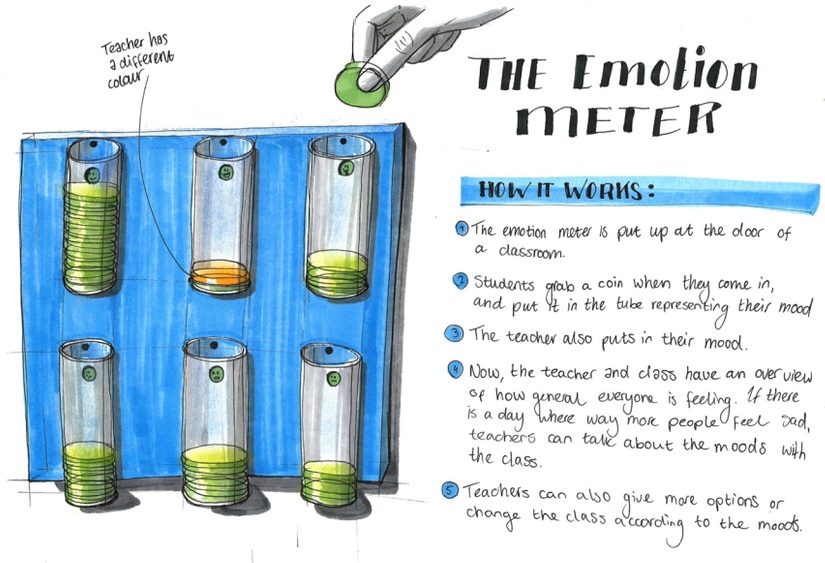
– Stacey, teacher and suitable education counsellor

'My wish would be that we make performance pressure issues discussable in the mentor-class.'

– Patricia, suitable education counsellor







Mood Meter

The Mood Meter hangs next to the classroom door and gives students coins to place in the tube that matches their mood at the start of each lesson. It can be a useful tool for teachers to initiate interaction when the mood is lower than usual and to explore ways to uplift it. For instance, when students feel very stressed about their Maths exam, and this suddenly affects their mood before the class, the teacher can try reassuring them, whereas otherwise, the class would just begin without a conversation. As a result, the teacher can talk about resilience and take a more intentional moment to demonstrate it.

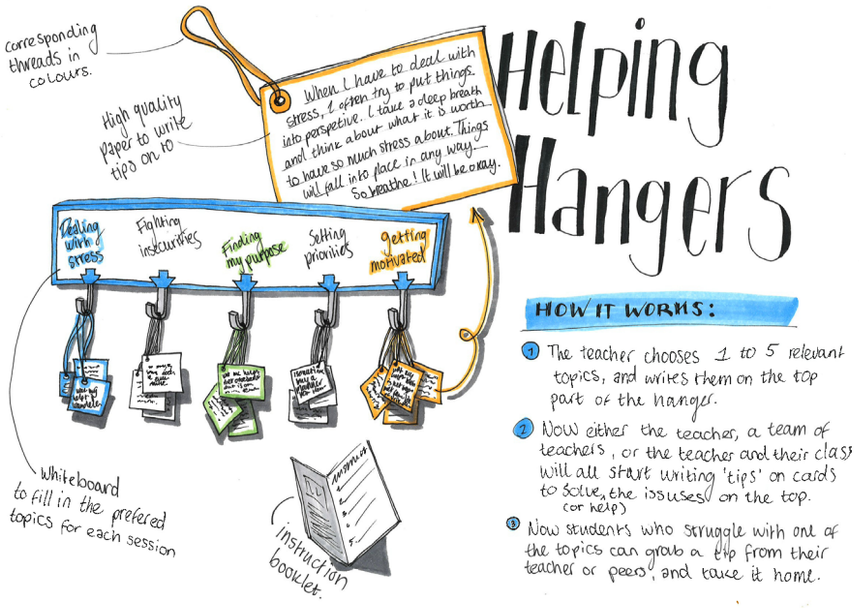
The teachers appreciated the insight this concept could give them about the mood and dynamics in the classroom. They liked that the teacher can also show their mood, and they noted that the physical aspect helps make it visible and easy to use. It simplifies checking in with students and discussing their struggles and well-being. However, the many coins involved in this product might get lost or thrown away, and the loose material could encourage messing around. A similar initiative exists in a digital format, so the participants expressed concerns that it might be too repetitive and wondered if the mood could be conveyed differently.

'It's a quick assessment for a teacher, like, hey, we need to pay attention to this.'

– Patricia, suitable education counsellor

What I also like about this concept: it could give insight into the cause of the changed group dynamics.'

– Mandy, support coordinator and former teacher

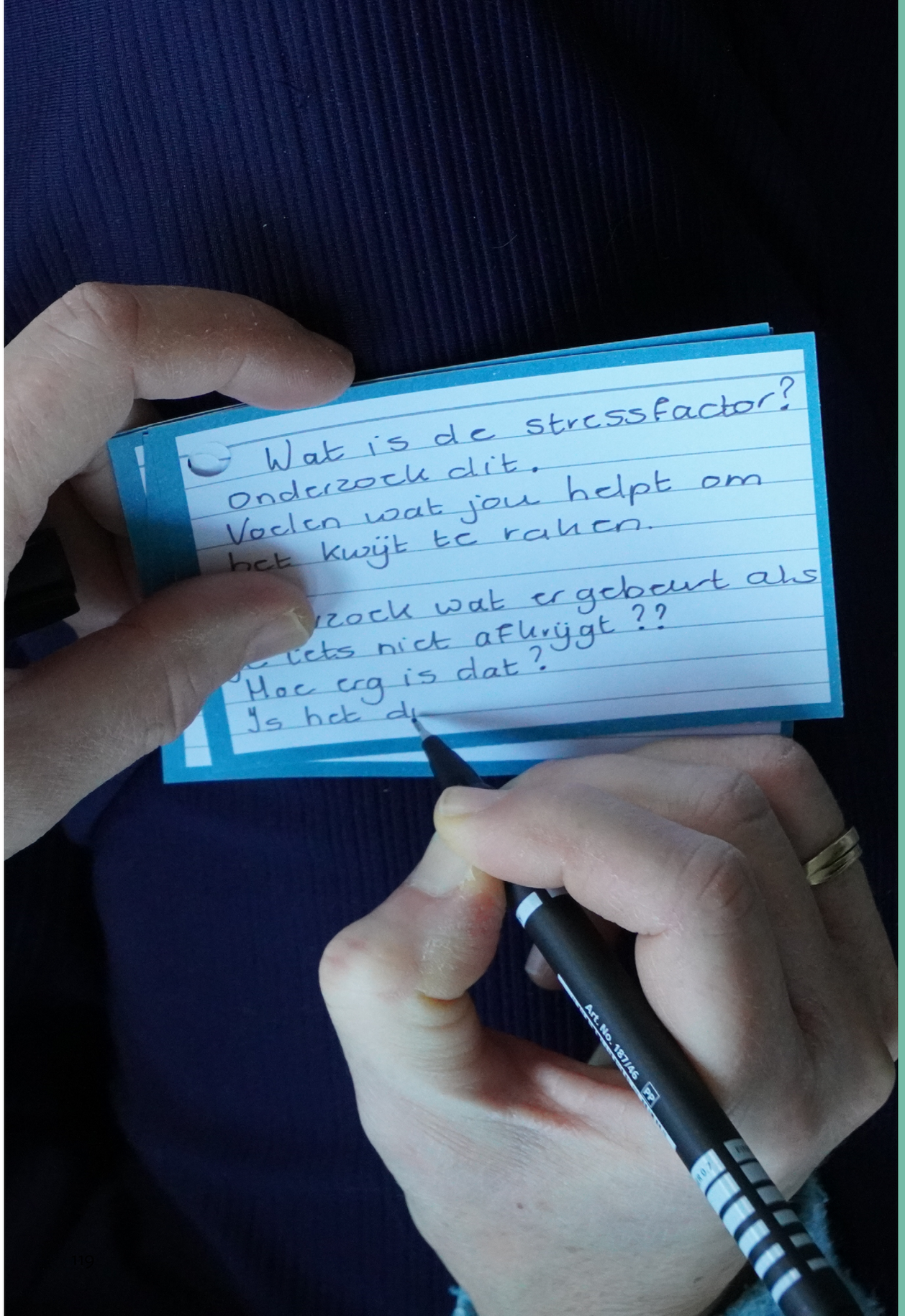


Helping Hangers

Helping Hangers is a tool for teachers to support students with their struggles, and could therefore make resilience and identity more explicit. It also promotes interaction and conversations. The Hangers are placed in the classroom and provide space at the top to note issues students might be struggling with, while the hooks below are used to hang cards with tips related to those issues. After defining what the students need, the teacher reflects on their experiences with these types of issues and writes down what has helped them in these situations. Then, students can take the cards they feel that they need the most.

The participants appreciated that this concept is visible and can easily spark conversations about well-being. The categories are useful for guiding discussions and making them more personalised. A good template would be necessary, especially for younger students, as they may find it difficult to know what to write. Additionally, the concept should be designed so it can be implemented in different classrooms and should accommodate various types of education (vmbo, havo, vwo). Participants also expressed a preference for a set weekly time to work on this and discuss well-being.

> *'I think it's very good that there are moments in a mentor class to start conversations about these topics. Otherwise, you only talk about certain issues when you're confronted with them.'*
>
> – Mandy, support coordinator and former teacher



Preferences

One participant had a clear preference for the Helping Hangers. The other participant preferred the Well-being Wall and the Helping Hangers as her favourite. The third participant mentioned all three, but for different age groups: Mood Meter could be useful for the youngest students, Helping Hangers for students in between, and the Well-being wall for the oldest students.

Other requirements

Other requirements that have arisen from the conversations in the evaluations and fieldwork, which were used for the development of the final concept:

- The design should not be compulsory; it should allow teachers to choose for themselves whether to share something, how to do so, and which experience to share.

> *'If something is imposed on me as a teacher, I find that difficult. Therefore, I wouldn't want there to be anything mandatory to use for teachers, but I do think more needs to be done about well-being.'*
>
> – Stacey, teacher and suitable education counsellor

- The design should address different topics, tailored to the schools' wishes and the differences among students and classes. Differences among students should be recognised as this can enhance the effectiveness of implementing social and emotional learning (SEL) interventions (Toenders et al., 2025).

> *'Very often, a method focuses very closely on certain topics. I think it could be a little more comprehensive. I haven't seen that yet.'*
>
> – Patricia, suitable education counsellor

- The design should be introduced by a duo of teachers. Two teachers can each share their experiences and tips, illustrating different ways for students to approach the topic and serving as role models for the students they connect with most. Teacher interviews and students have emphasised the benefits of implementing a well-being intervention in duos. Involving more than two teachers could complicate implementation, as it would require more planning and each teacher's presence in every lesson.

> *'At the moment, which mentor you get is so random that the quality of your guidance depends entirely on the person you are assigned to.'*
>
> – Thijs, teacher

> *'I am on the side of the somewhat older mentors, and for a while now, I have also had a very young mentor working alongside me. That is great for the students, of course, but I learn from it myself as well. He has new, fresh ideas.'*
>
> – Laurien, teacher

5.4 CONCLUSION

There appears to be the greatest potential in Helping Hangers and the Well-Being Wall, so these two concepts are merged into one, based on the evaluation results, challenges, and wishes.

Implications for designing

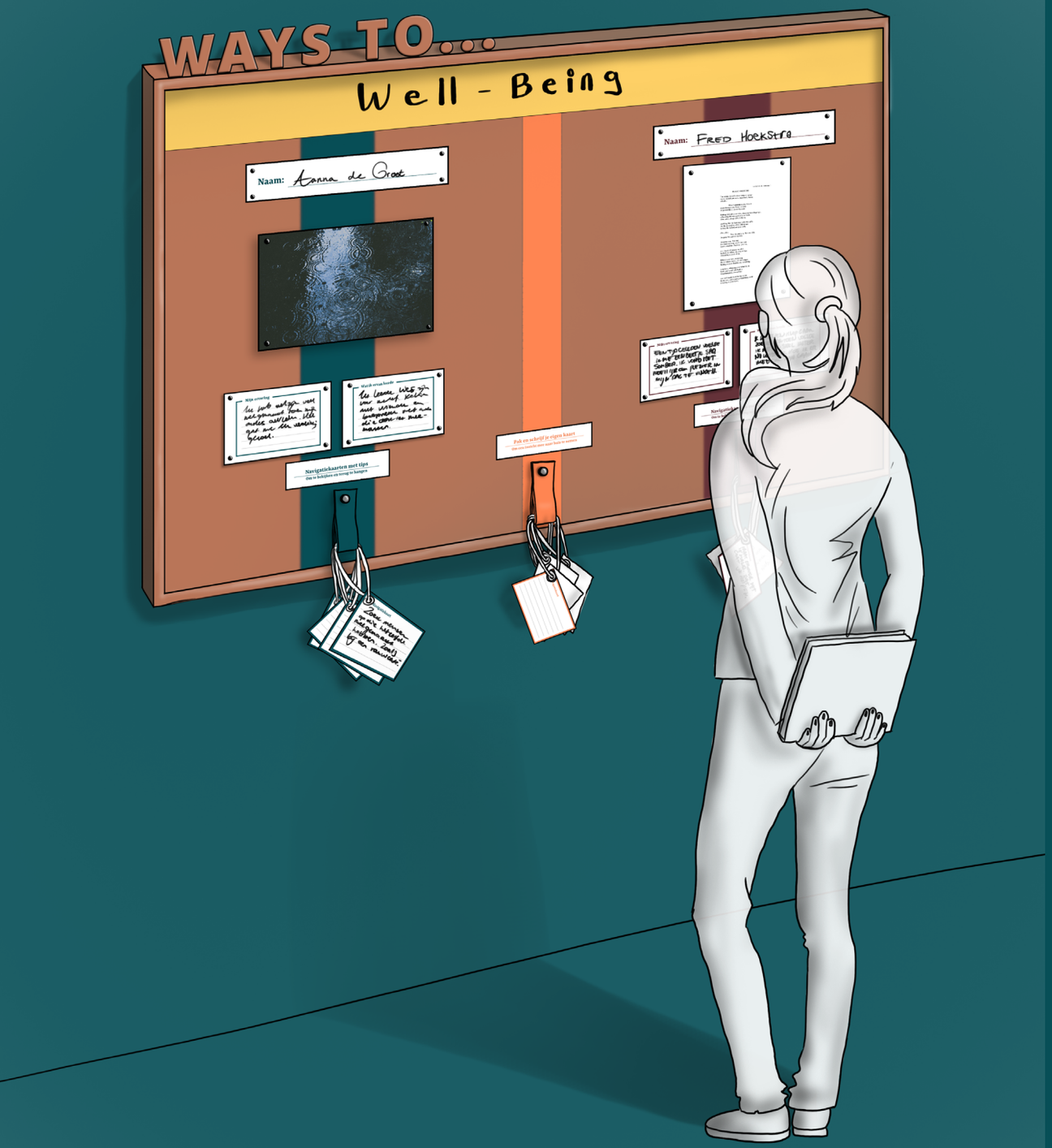
The insights from this chapter resulted in the following design requirements, which merge the qualities and challenges of the Well-being Wall and the Helping Hangers:

- The design should start a conversation about well-being between the teacher and students, fostering openness, sharing and inspiration.
- The design should convey that the school values well-being.
- The design should be easy to implement.
- The design should include categories to personalise discussions for students.
- The design should involve students.
- The design should be made of high-quality materials that are valuable to students and fit the classroom setting.
- The design should foster a safe environment for teachers and students to be vulnerable.
- The design should be suitable for multiple classrooms.
- The design should take the teachers' limited time into consideration.
- The design should highlight the human side of the teacher.
- The design should express emotions.
- Teachers should initiate sharing their experiences and/or feelings.
- The design should be introduced in a mentor class as a project.
- The design should provide a template to help students know what to write.
- The design should not be compulsory.
- The design should be introduced by a duo of teachers.



‘Every so often, we have one-on-one conversations with students, where students bring up issues such as finding it difficult to make friends in class. You could collect several problems and then devote a mentor class to these topics by writing advice cards for each other.’

– Bart, teacher, about the Coat Rack



6. WAYS TO WELL-BEING

What

This chapter introduces Ways to Well-Being, the final concept that integrates all the insights from this project. First, the concept will be explained in detail, including its implementation steps and use scenario. Then, it will be related back to the theory. Finally, the outcomes of teacher and student evaluations will be discussed, and a recommended implementation plan will be outlined.

For whom

This chapter outlines a possible approach for schools to apply the role model theory and research findings. It is relevant for school management, teachers, and other stakeholders seeking interventions to strengthen role models within schools.

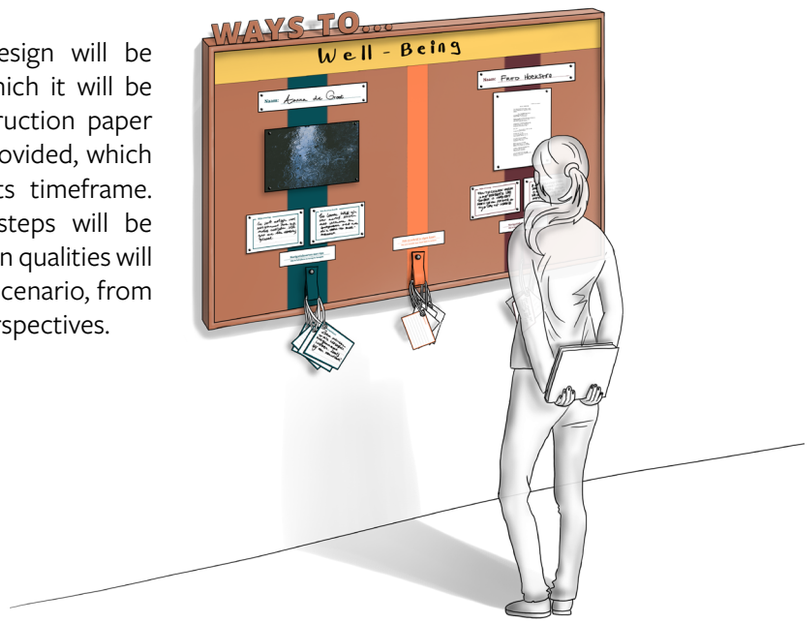
6.1 WAYS TO WELL-BEING EXPLAINED

‘Ways to Well-being’ (or ‘Wegen naar Welzijn’ in Dutch) is a tool for teachers to express their resilience, identity, and interactions, and to initiate conversations with students about well-being. By first reflecting on their own experiences and then sharing relevant parts of them, teachers open up to students and encourage them to do the same. To assist the teacher in navigating this process in a structured, purposeful manner, Ways to Well-Being has been developed. It guides teachers through the following steps:

1. To become aware of what role modelling is and can do.
2. Reflect on their own ‘ways to well-being’ to make them more intentional and explicit.
3. Make these ‘ways’ visible to students. And showing why the ‘ways’ matter.
4. Show how students can copy these ‘ways’ to use for themselves.

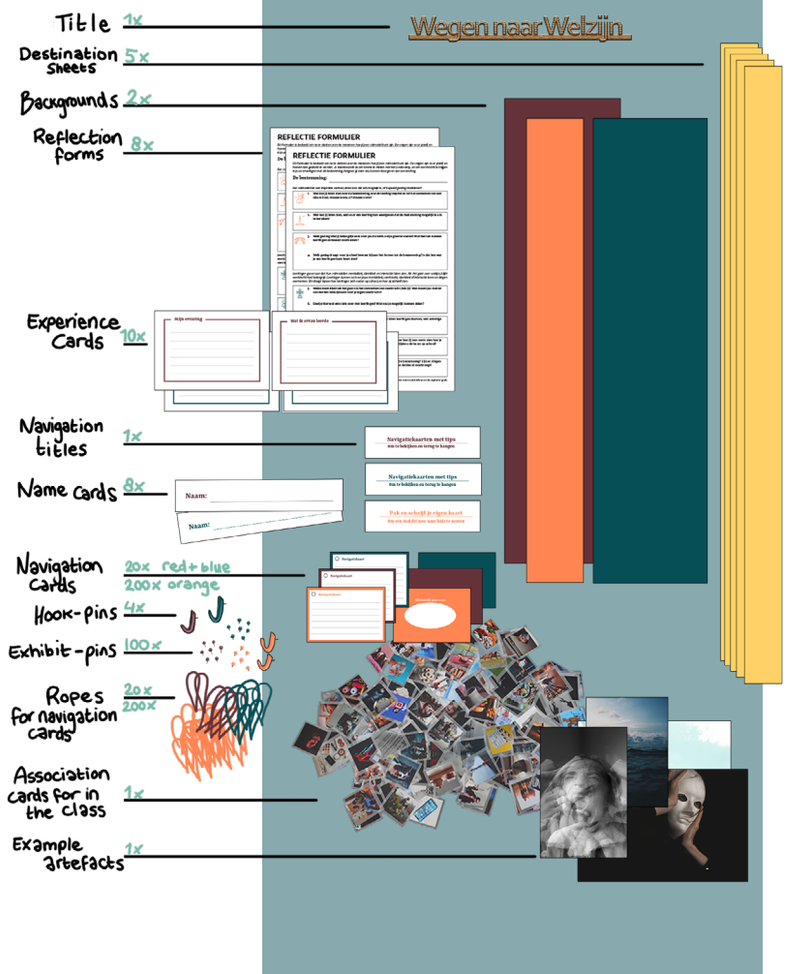
The tool is used in a mentor class and focuses on a specific ‘destination’ towards well-being. This destination and its associated experiences should connect to one of the three overlapping themes: resilience, identity, or interaction. The process involves two teachers who have both reflected on their experiences beforehand. They will share their insights and advice about the destination, and in a dedicated mentor class, these will be discussed with students. The teacher is supported in this process by practical tools that help them explicitly and intentionally share their experiences and advice. Ways to Well-being provides these tools in a comprehensive toolkit (bottom right). A notice board is used to display the teachers’ Ways to Well-being (top right).

On the next pages, the design will be explained in the order in which it will be implemented. First, the instruction paper for school management is provided, which explains the concept and its timeframe. Then, the implementation steps will be explained. Next, the interaction qualities will be illustrated through a use scenario, from both teacher and student perspectives.





What’s in the box





Instructions for school management

Thank you for purchasing Ways to Well-Being (WtW)! This introduction will provide initial set-up that needs to be in place before introducing the WtW to teachers. It is recommended that one person on the school team is responsible for leading the Ways of Well-being process.

Week 0
First, a theme needs to be chosen, which you want the Ways to Well-Being to be about. This theme is called the 'destination' for the Ways to Well-Being. The destination should cover at least one of the following aspects: resilience, identity or interaction. The destination should be quite explicit, as that will make it easier for teacher to reflect on their experiences. It is recommended to find a destination together with students, that is currently relevant to your school, such as something students have mentioned they struggle with or a theme currently introduced in the curriculum.

Week 1 & 2
Secondly, teachers should be informed. On the website, a setup email is provided for communicating the WtW to teachers. Make sure to add the chosen destination so teachers can decide whether they feel an affinity with the theme. Next, teachers can apply to participate by responding to the email. Teachers can take up to 2 weeks to respond.

Week 3-6
Next, two teachers are chosen. Each gets one of the two provided packages. They both need 2 hours to themselves to read the instructions and complete the assignments. The two teachers will also have to schedule 1 hour together to prepare for the class. In total, they both need 3 hours of preparation time. It is recommended to plan 1 month to schedule these 3 hours in.

Week 7-8
Plan a moment within the following two weeks, with the teachers, in which classes they will introduce their Ways to Well-Being. If the teachers are both mentors, it is recommended to schedule a mentor lesson to introduce the Ways to Well-Being for each of their classes (so two lessons in total). They will both be present at the same class when introducing their WtW.

Week 7-9
After the classes, the teachers can choose for themselves if they would prefer to remove their Ways to Well-being (for example, if they feel the content is too vulnerable to be up on the wall without them being present), or keep them on the notice board a bit longer (to potentially inspire other students as well).

Week 10 / Week 0
After one quarter (10 weeks), the teachers return the contents of the boxes to school management. Then, another theme can be chosen, with two other teachers providing their Ways to Well-Being. The process repeats from the top.

Implementation steps

The following steps illustrate the intended implementation of Ways to Well-being.

1. Context and set-up by the school

Ways to Well-being is provided to the teacher through the school that purchased the tool. The school receives the package, opens it and reads the reason and the 'instructions for school management' paper. This paper is shown on the previous page, and explains the concept from a school management perspective.

The school management thus chooses a theme, a 'destination' to which the Ways to Well-being will lead. They will submit a request to teachers and choose two teachers from the replies, as the first 'Way finders'. They plan out the mentor lessons with them and hand them the boxes.

To illustrate the concept, the example destination of 'be kind to yourself' will be used. This destination falls under the umbrella theme of 'resilience'.

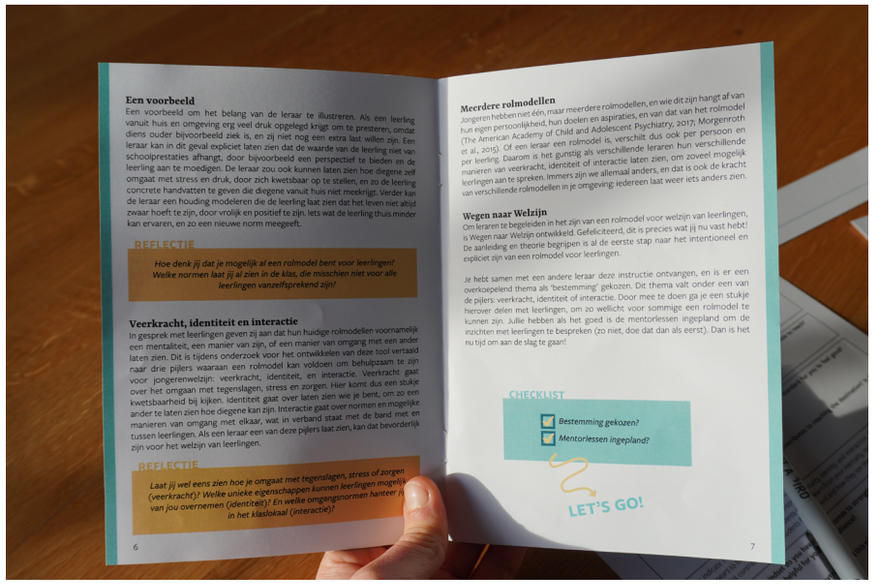
2. Unboxing

The teacher has signed up and has been chosen by their school management to take part in Ways to Well-being (WtW). They hear who the other teacher is, ensure the mentor lessons dedicated to implementing the WtW are planned, and then receive a cardboard box from school management. In this box, the different elements are provided, along with a clear guideline. The teacher starts by opening the box and reading the guidance booklet. This is done individually. The booklet is provided in Attachment 18.



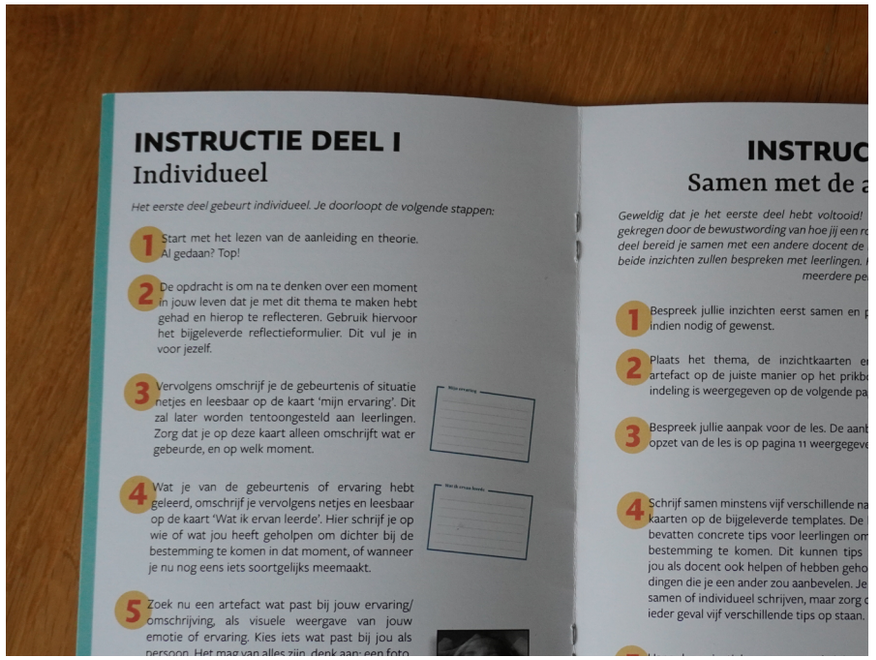
3. Informing about the reason and role modelling theory

The booklet includes an explanation of the teacher's role in youth well-being and an introduction to role model theory. This will help teachers be more intentional during the assignment and understand the goal. It already includes reflective questions that prompt teachers to reflect on their role as role models in their day-to-day lives.



4. Introduction to the assignment

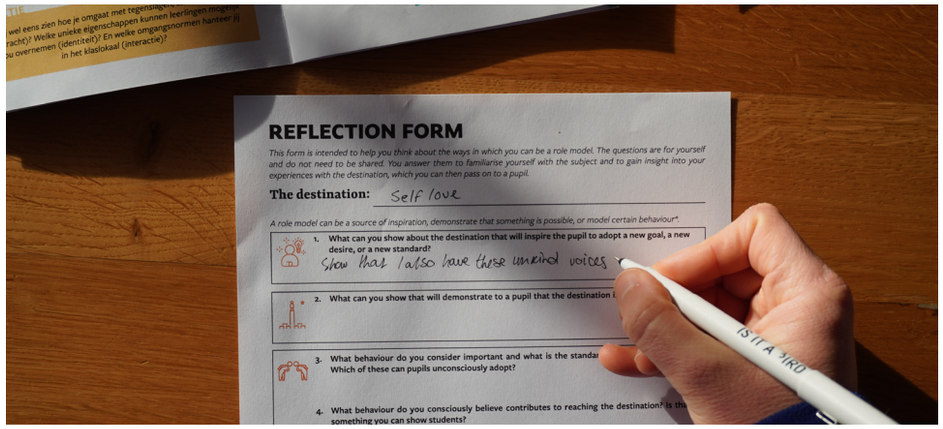
After introducing the reason and importance of role modelling, the teachers are introduced to the assignment. They are asked to reflect on a moment they have experienced that relates to the school's chosen destination.



5. Reflection

The teachers are given a sheet of reflective questions to help them be more intentional about their experiences and approaches to reaching the destination. They complete them individually. The experiences do not need to be heavy or negative; they can also be more light-hearted examples. The forms are provided in Attachment 19.

For example, the teachers reflect on past moments when they found it harder to be kind to themselves. What, or who, has helped them in that moment? What did they learn from this experience?



6. Writing takeaways

After taking time to reflect, the teachers will now summarise the relevant aspects for students to learn from their experiences, and write down why they matter. The box contains templates to fill in, guiding the teacher on how to do this concisely. They are still doing this individually.

A teacher could write:

'In the past, when I made a mistake, I sometimes got this angry voice in my head, telling me I did not do well enough, and I could never do anything right. Whereas, when a friend would make the exact same mistake, I would tell them that we are all human and that mistakes are part of life, and it's okay. Now, I try to talk to myself like that kind friend more often.'



7. Finding a personal artefact

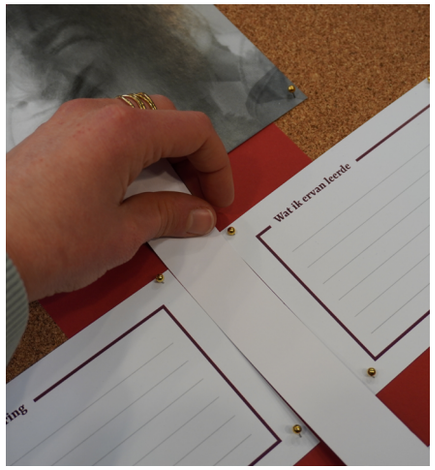
Now, the teachers look for an artefact that resonates with their personality and the experience they have described. This could be an image, poem, piece of art, piece of music, or anything else they could hang up on the notice board. It should show a sense of identity towards students; therefore, it should be personal and not predetermined which artefact is used. - However, to make implementation simple and low effort, several images are provided in the toolbox for teachers to choose from (Attachment 20).

An artefact selected in this example could be a soft piece of fabric that resembles the gentle voice the teacher mentioned, or an image of someone wearing a mask, to symbolise that they sometimes wish to hide these voices from others.



8. Preparing the exhibit

After filling in the templates and selecting an artefact individually, the two teachers now take a moment together to arrange the elements on a notice board in the correct order. They are guided by the booklet and a spacing strip to ensure proper placement. They discuss their reflections and what they have written. Finally, they prepare the mentor class together by discussing their approach.





9. Making navigation-cards

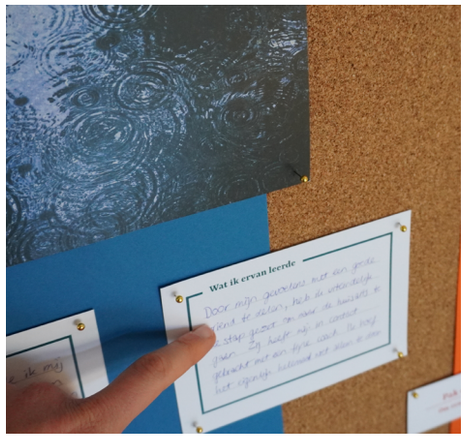
While the class is being prepared, the teachers also create at least five different navigation cards with useful tips to help students reach the destination or find ways there. They can be filled in together or individually.

One of the navigation cards reads:
'If you find it difficult to be kind to yourself, try to talk to yourself as if you were talking to your best friend. What would you say to them if they were experiencing what you are experiencing right now? Or what do you think they would say to you? It takes time before this goes automatic, but it can shape more positive thoughts about yourself, and it is good to practice with it.'



10. Finding Ways to Well-being with students

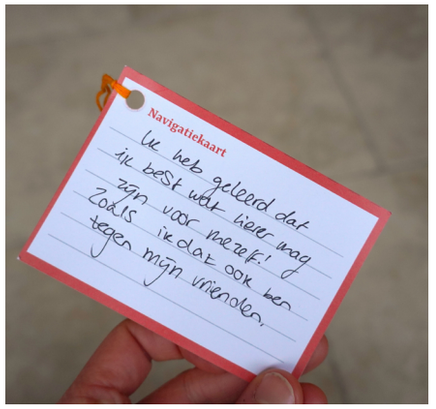
Then, it is time for the dedicated mentor class. On the next page, the recommended set-up of the class is shown. Teachers will start the class by sharing their experexperiences. Next, students will have a moment to reflect on a similar experience in their own lives. They will use association images from the toolbox to identify a visual element that relates to their experiences. Afterwards, teachers will initiate a discussion with students about the cards they have selected and about their own experiences. Perhaps someone has experienced something similar, and a conversation will develop. It is important to emphasise that no one is obliged to join this discussion.





In the second part of the class, the students will discuss the teachers' navigation cards by sharing them and talking about them. They will end class by writing their own, using the provided orange cards. On the back, they can write the destination, and on the front their main take-away from the class. What did they learn from the discussed experiences? What can they do in the future when they want to reach the destination? They can use the teacher's navigation cards as examples and inspiration. At the end of the class, they will take their card home.





11. Removing the exhibited Ways

The teachers will decide whether to keep their exhibition up for another week, so students can have another chance to look at it and discuss it, and so other students can see it as well. If the teachers feel uncomfortable leaving the Ways up on the wall when they might not be there themselves, they can also remove them right away after the lesson. They hand the tools to the school management, who can then hand them out to the next teacher duo. From there, the process starts again from the start.

12. Refill

After one year, the box, which contains enough materials for 4 cycles of Wayfinding and 8 mentor lessons, needs to be refilled by the school through ordering a refill package (shown in Attachment 21).

The templates for the toolbox and refill, which were used for the prototype, are provided in Attachment 22.

The mentor class setup

The followng guidance is provided to teachers for setting up the mentor class. It is also provided in Dutch, in the introduction booklet in Attachment 18.

Potential

SETUP OF THE MENTORCLASS

It is important that every teacher teaches the lesson in the way that suits them best. That is why this is a suggestion, as a possible guide. It is entirely up to the teachers whether they want to approach it in this way or in another way.

1 Introduce the destination (5 min)
The class begins with introducing the destination. What is the class about, and what have you as teachers reflected on?

2 Share your own experiences (10 min)
Next, take turns presenting the exhibition. What situations have you described, and what artefacts have you chosen to illustrate them? What insights have you gained?

3 Let students reflect (20 min)
The students now have time to reflect, using the association cards provided. They think about whether there has been a moment in their own lives or in the lives of someone they know when they encountered the topic of the destination.

4 Discuss navigation cards (5 min)
Four students are then invited to come to the front to read the navigation cards aloud. The teacher may also do this themselves. The teacher asks the students whether they also thought of these tips during the reflection assignment.

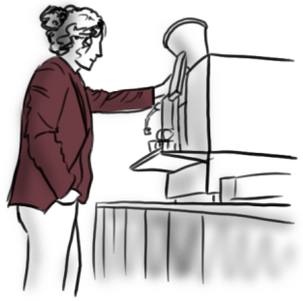
5 Students write their own card (10 min)
The students now all take an empty card. The orange cards are for the students to write down their own insights and take home with them. On the back, the student can fill in the destination so that they can remember what the lesson was about. The insight can be what the teacher has written down, or another insight. It must be useful and appealing for themselves.



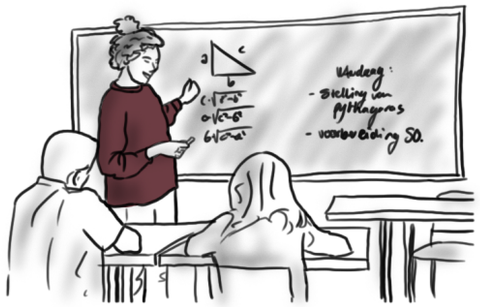
Teacher / student use scenario

The following scenario shows the teacher and student interactions with Ways to Well-being. First, a typical day is depicted. Then, the implications of Ways to Well-being throughout the teacher's week are illustrated. It suggests that the concept might inspire reflection during moments outside of school as well. Then, the students are involved.











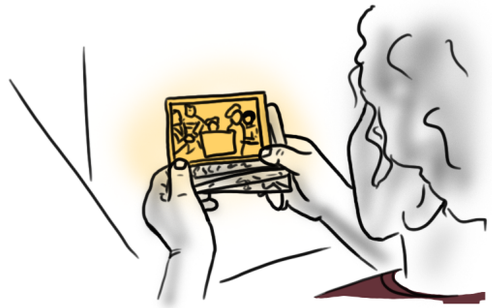






















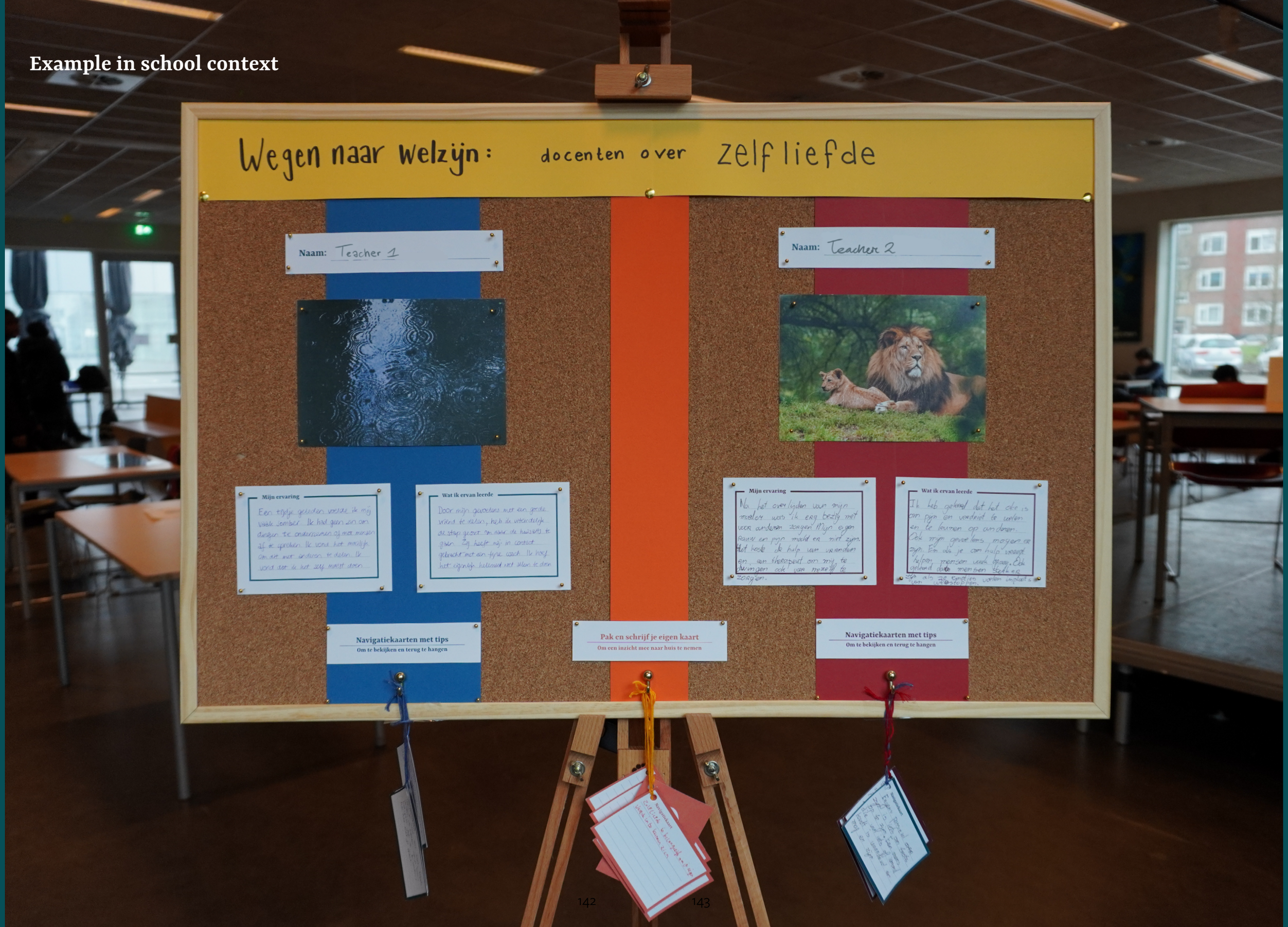


Finally, perhaps in the long term, students should have learned more about their identity, ways of interacting with each other, or how to foster their resilience.





Example in school context



6.2 IMPLICATIONS OF THE THEORY

Ways to Well-Being is developed using the theoretical foundation as explained in Chapter 2. Next, each theory that informed the selection and development of the concept in a specific way will be discussed: role model functions for well-being, the role model construct, the COM-B model for behavioural change, and the Self-Determination Theory.

Role model functions

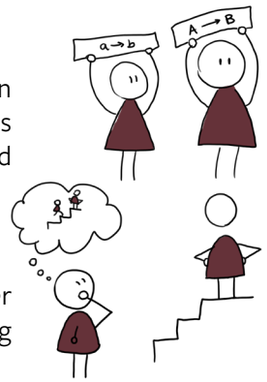
According to Dopmeijer et al. (2023), role models have three main functions as protective factors for youth well-being. Together with the functions of a role model as defined by Morgenroth et al. (2015), these have served as guidelines for the design of Ways to Well-being.

Opening up conversations about well-being and normalising it.
The concept helps open conversations about well-being by providing a specific moment for sharing something personal. Having the teacher open up about something they have experienced encourages students to do the same, setting the right example. By introducing this in schools, the norms become clear about the importance of ensuring well-being.

Sharing experiences related to well-being, helping to identify which levels of stress and pressure are normal and which are too high.
The experiences are framed around well-being, and by showing two different teachers' perspectives and ensuring conversations and sharing among students, a reflective discussion can take place about what is 'normal' or more common to experience and what is not.

Showing how they work on improving their well-being and mental health, making it normal to prioritise your own mental health.
The concept has been designed so that teachers can showcase their learning and the takeaways from their experience. This way, they can model for students that working on their well-being can be done in several ways, and they show the importance of prioritising it.

A role model is a behavioural model.
Ways to Well-being has been designed not only to show an experience but also to explicitly describe how the teacher has dealt with it, making behaviour related to resilience, identity and interaction easier to copy.



A role model is a representation of the possible.
By sharing explicit experiences and lessons from them, the teacher can convey that setbacks or certain emotions are possible (shifting norms) and that you always learn from such experiences.



A role model is an inspiration.
By sharing a personal experience, the teacher can inspire students to open up, and by sharing learnings and specific ways of dealing with it, the teacher can inspire students to learn new ways of coping with experiences that influence their well-being.

COM-B Model

The COM-B model has been explained as a reliable framework for designing for behavioural change. Since the intention is to help students change their behaviour in ways that are more beneficial to their well-being (through role models), this framework was used to develop Ways to Well-being, as follows.



Capabilities
Capabilities refer to students' physical and psychological abilities, in this case to engage in behaviours beneficial to their well-being. To explicitly enhance students' psychological capabilities through role models, the navigation cards have been designed. These can give students concrete steps to follow when they experience something similar to what the teacher experienced. It therefore enhances their resilience.



Opportunities
Opportunities refer to everything outside the student that enables them to engage in behaviour. Ways to Well-being provides a physical opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations and read about resilience/identity/interaction by dedicating time in the mentor class and by providing a (physical) exposition board for reference. Moreover, Ways to Well-being provides a social opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations by placing it in the school setting and ensuring group conversations.



Motivation
Motivation refers to the reflective, conscious intentions of the student towards behaviour, as well as the automatic responses to it (such as habits and emotions). Ways to Well-being is designed to foster reflective motivation, through making the student reflect on both their teachers' and their own experiences and related behaviour. This could help them choose the right behaviour, as their beliefs about certain behaviours may change (e.g., when a teacher demonstrates that a particular behaviour is beneficial for coping with a setback, this might change students' motivation to behave this way). Furthermore, automatic motivation to change behaviour is fostered by the design that shows emotions and norms around behaviour (e.g., feeling this way is okay) and by teaching students habits to cope with things, which can change their responses (e.g., when a learning shows that embracing feelings is better than pushing them away).

Self-Determination Theory

Motivation is further enhanced by fostering the three fundamental needs described in Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The three needs, autonomy, competence and relatedness, have been taken into account while designing Ways to Well-being.

Autonomy

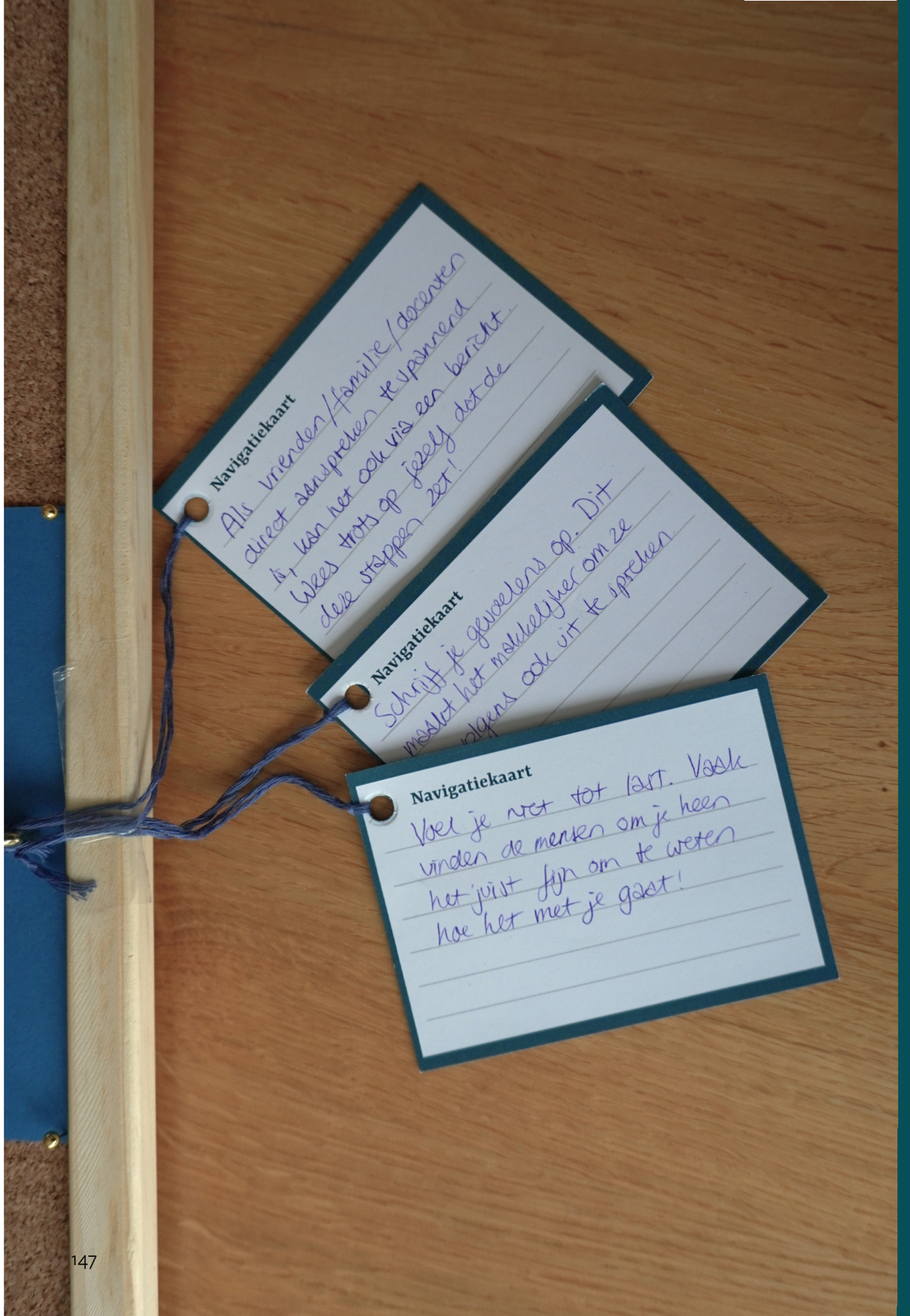
The autonomy of both the school, teachers and students has been fostered. Allowing a destination specific to the school and group to be chosen gives the school and students autonomy. The teacher has autonomy to choose their own shared experience and artefact, and to decide how deeply the story they want to share is. Furthermore, students' autonomy is enhanced during class by allowing them to choose from association cards related to the topic, giving them freedom to share what they want, not being forced, and to make their own navigation card to take home.
At the same time, there is a structure in place with a recommended use to ensure proper guidance of this autonomy, and several examples are available in the toolbox, such as a stack of different photos to choose from as artefacts.

Competence

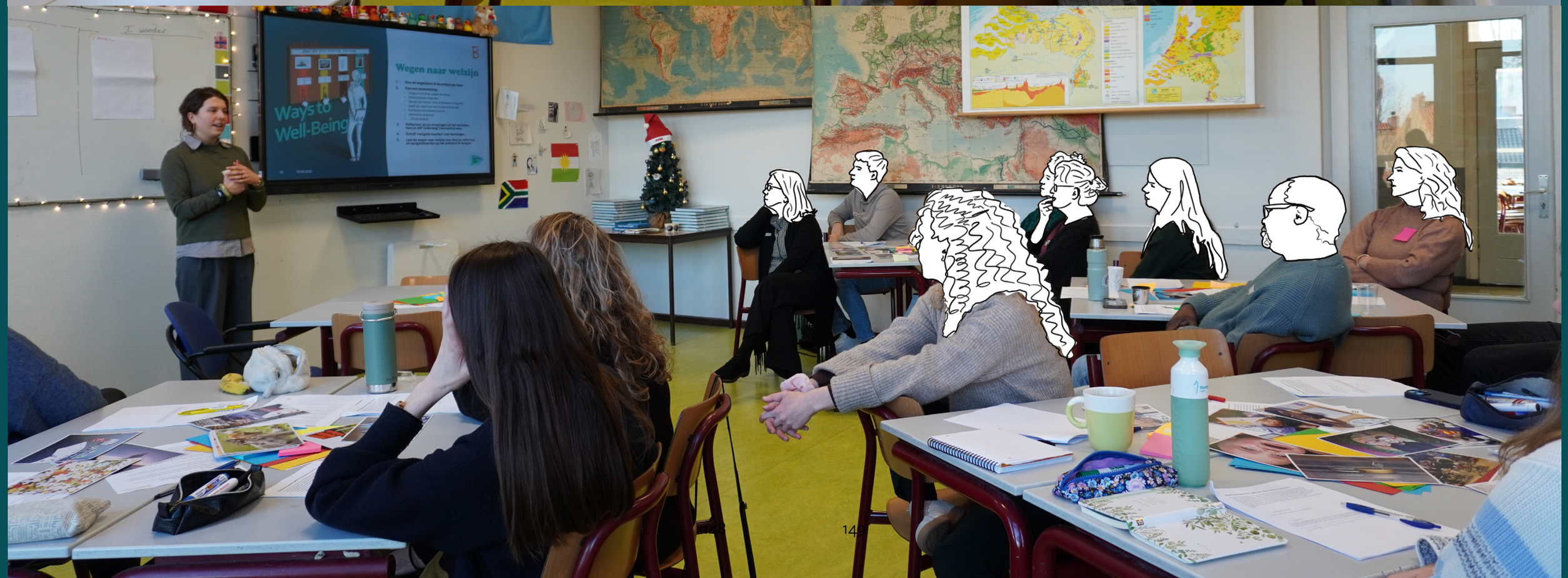
The need for competence among students is designed as described in the previous section about 'capabilities'. Teachers' need for competence is also taken into account: by focussing on the competences the teacher already has, and by letting the teacher reflect on somehting they have been already been learning from.

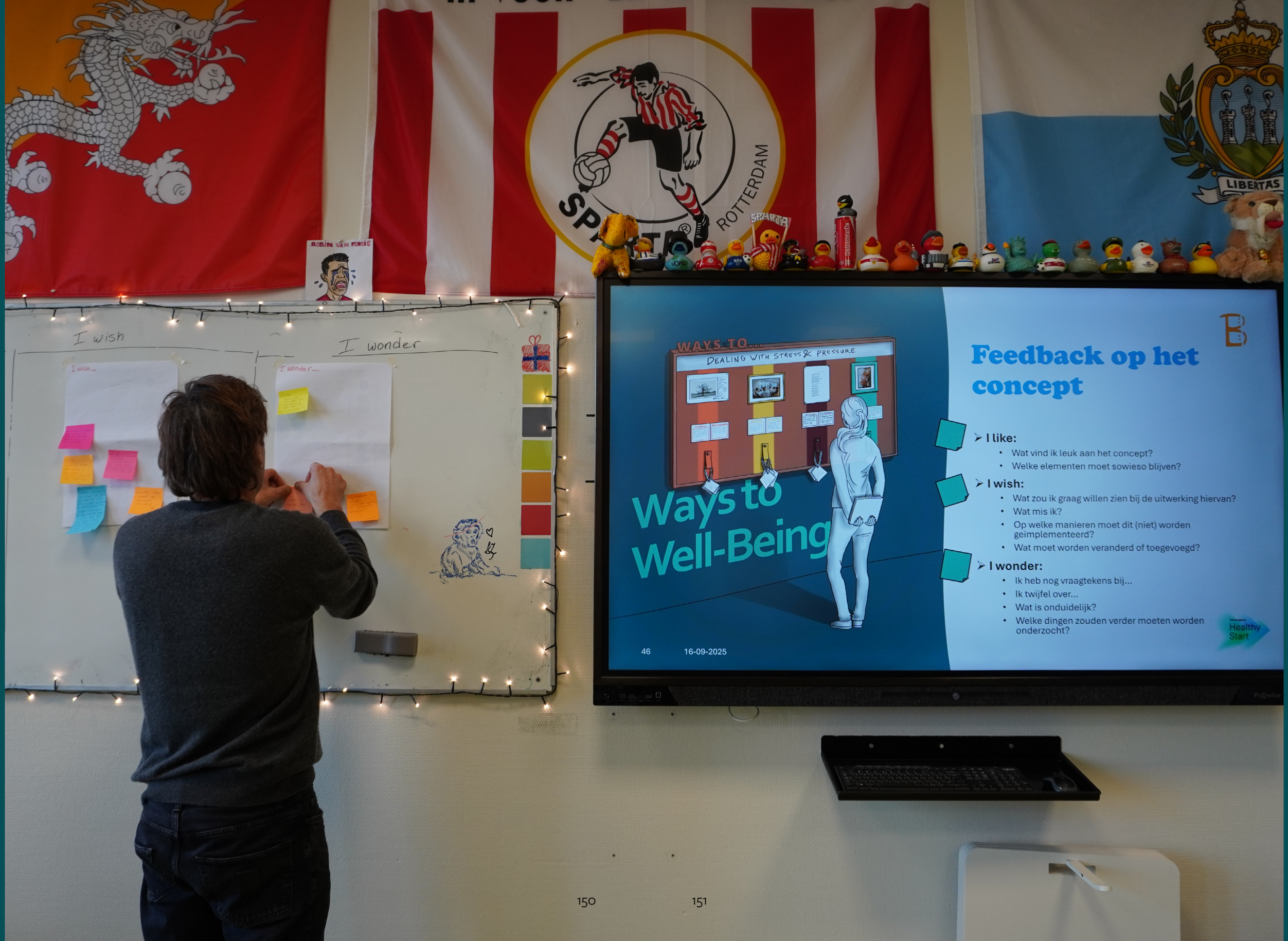
Relatedness

Ways to Well-being aims to promote the need for relatedness in various ways. It is designed to connect teachers and students through sharing personal stories and providing time for this. Secondly, it helps students relate to their teachers' experiences, making them feel less alone in what they face or when they encounter similar situations later in life. Thirdly, the relatedness among classmates is strengthened by encouraging deeper conversations within the group. Additionally, teachers' need for relatedness is met by connecting them with a colleague. Lastly, Ways to Well-Being is deliberately implemented within a mentor class (rather than in a hallway on its own), with two teachers present to foster relatedness.




Wegen naar welzijn
Ways to Well-Being


I wonder
Wegen naar welzijn
Ways to Well-Being


I wish
I wonder
I wish...
I wonder...
ROBIN VAN PERSIE
SPARTA
ROTTERDAM
LIBERTAS
WAYS TO...
DEALING WITH STRESS & PRESSURE
Ways to Well-Being
Feedback op het concept
I like:
Wat vind ik leuk aan het concept?
Welke elementen moet sowieso blijven?
I wish:
Wat zou ik graag willen zien bij de uitwerking hiervan?
Wat mis ik?
Op welke manieren moet dit (niet) worden geïmplementeerd?
Wat moet worden veranderd of toegevoegd?
I wonder:
Ik heb nog vraagtekens bij...
Ik twijfel over...
Wat is onduidelijk?
Welke dingen zouden verder moeten worden onderzocht?
Healthy Start
46
16-09-2025

6.3 EVALUATION

The final evaluation was conducted in two stages: first, a teacher evaluation at school A (n = 31), and then a student evaluation at school B (n = 26). For the methods, see Chapter 3.3. For the student evaluation at school B, two teachers contributed by writing stories about their experiences and lessons learned (as potential role models). This section first discusses the teacher evaluation outcomes from school A, then describes teacher engagement at school B in creating the stories, and finally presents the student evaluation findings, grouped into the themes of interaction, identity, and resilience. It will end with a conclusion on the evaluation.

Teacher evaluation

The final concept was evaluated with 31 secondary school teachers (school A) using the 'I like, I wish, I wonder' method, as explained in Chapter 3.3. The most important outcomes are summarised below.

Personality and vulnerability

Fourteen teachers have mentioned to like that this concept shows personal experiences in a human way. They like that the teacher's personality can be shared and that this vulnerability shows their human side to students. Of all the factors identified from this evaluation, this was most often chosen, indicating a strong value in the product.

'I like: the element of showing that someone else (even your teacher) may have had the same problem and that he or she has overcome it!'

– Teacher

'I like: personal stories from teachers, showing students that we are all concerned with the same issues'

– Teacher

'As a teenager, I enjoyed the fifth class so much that I did it twice, and now that I am a mentor to a class with a few repeaters, mentioning this helps to ease the pressure a little. Like: it can happen to the nicest people.'

– Jack, teacher

'It's great (and rightly so) that teachers' mountain of life experience can be put to better use. Because we are just like human beings ;)'

– Teacher

At the same time, eight teachers wonder about vulnerability. Some wonder whether the concept will be taken seriously by students, whether it is safe enough to share personal experiences, or whether students want to learn about such experiences from teachers. Two teachers preferred student participation to be anonymous, for example, by allowing students to look online.

'To what extent do you really go into depth? Should we want teachers to be open about addictions/depression?'

– Teacher

'I wonder about the practical implementation. Being vulnerable is also stressful for teachers. How do you find enough candidates? Perhaps anonymous participation, for the start-up, or also participation by (senior) students?'

– Teacher

'I like: vulnerability as a basis for sharing setbacks as well'

– Teacher

Accessibility and low threshold

Six teachers have mentioned liking the concept's accessibility and low threshold. Concrete tips and tricks, easy to take home by students on small cards, with an easy, workable activity. In addition to the six teachers who mentioned accessibility in the 'like' section, four teachers mentioned that they wished the concept to be low threshold in use, not taking too much time, in an editable and workable format with examples: easy to use and understand.

'I like: an accessible way for a student to feel understood.'

– Teacher

'An editable and fillable format containing relevant examples. This makes it user-friendly and accessible to get started with.'

– Teacher

'I wish that the texts on the cards were clear at first glance and didn't require further explanation. I wonder how accessible the cards are for most students, or whether they are 'sexy' enough.'

– Teacher



‘It reminds me a bit of those little tiles with words of wisdom on them. You know, when your grandpa or grandma has a lot of life experience, they write it down and hang it up. I thought it was funny to see that link with those centuries-old tiles of wisdom.’

– Ruud, teacher

Furthermore, three teachers have mentioned the accessibility in the 'wonder' section, wondering how it is accessible to and taken seriously by all students. Two other teachers mentioned not to make the concept a forced task, but to make it voluntary for teachers who are interested in it. One teacher later mentioned that he would like Ways to Well-being to be integrated into an existing well-being intervention to make implementation even easier. Overall accessibility seems to be an important aspect of the design.

I wonder, how can this be accessible to everyone? How can we ensure that it is taken seriously?

– Teacher

Don't implement this by assigning it as a task to certain teachers; I believe that teachers' intrinsic motivation is the most important factor for success.

– Teacher

Student input for destination

Five teachers have explicitly mentioned actively involving students in determining the destination theme. First, students need to determine the destination; then, teachers can sign up to the destination they have affinity with. This way, the destination and the associated advice are most relevant for students.

'The students must identify the topics they consider important. Then find the role models for those topics.'

– Teacher

'I wonder how the teachers are assigned to the destination. I can also imagine that a teacher chooses themselves, because they have a certain affinity with the subject. So once the destination has been chosen, you can say, this is the one I want to do.'

– Mario, teacher

Mentor class

When asked about the placement and implementation of the concept, five teachers preferred it be implemented in a mentor class rather than left hanging in the hallway without supervision. They mention safety as the most important reason. One teacher mentioned both the mentor class and the hallway, as the hallway offers more reach.

'I think it's best in the classroom, because that's safer for the student and the teacher.'

– Teacher

'I wouldn't just hang it up without any reference in the mentoring classes.'

– Teacher

Visibility and connection

Connection seems to be another valuable aspect of the concept. Two teachers hoped this concept would ignite dialogue at the school level. Additionally, three teachers highlighted the increased connection this concept fosters, whether between students and teachers, among teachers working together, or by making it easier for students to approach someone.

'I like: students may find it easier to approach someone.'

– Teacher

'Collaboration between teachers is always good.'

– Teacher

Other insights

Other insights included that teachers liked the involvement of several teachers, who served as role models for different students; that teachers thought the idea was creative, inspiring, and renewing; and, at the same time, that some had concerns about whether it would work in practice. For that reason, an evaluation was done with students.

'There are students who like me very much, and there is also a group who find me too dominant. I am not a role model for those students, but that is why it is good that there are several teachers involved here.'

– Anton, teacher

'I like the creativity and originality: I am sure that students will be curious to see this.'

– Teacher

'Teachers don't always have all the answers either!.'

– Teacher



‘When I am teaching one of the well-being lessons, I often share something about my own experience with the topics. This often works very well with students; they respond to it.’

– Fredrik, teacher

Wegen naar welzijn: docenten over zelfliefde

Naam: _____



Mijn ervaring

Een tijdje geleden voelde ik mij vaak somber. Ik had geen zin om dingen te ondernemen of met mensen af te spreken. Ik vond het moeilijk om dit met anderen te delen. Ik vond dat ik het zelf moest doen.

Wat ik ervan leerde

Door mijn gevoelens met een goede vriend te delen, heb ik uiteindelijk de stap gezet om naar de huisarts te gaan. Zij heeft mij in contact gebracht met een fijne coach. Ik hoef het eigenlijk helemaal niet alleen te doen.

Navigatiekaarten met tips

Om te bekijken en terug te hangen

Pak en schrijf je eigen kaart

Om een inzicht mee naar huis te nemen

Naam: _____



Mijn ervaring

Na het overlijden van mijn moeder was ik erg bezig met voor anderen zorgen. Mijn eigen rouw en pijn mocht er niet zijn. Het kostte de hulp van vrienden en een therapeut om mij te dwingen ook voor mezelf te zorgen.

Wat ik ervan leerde

Ik heb geleerd dat het oke is om pijn en verdriet te voelen en te leunen op anderen. Ook mijn gevoelens mogen er zijn. En als je om hulp vraagt helpen mensen vaak graag. Ook geleerd dat mensen sterker zijn als ze emoties voelen inplaats van wegstoppen.

Navigatiekaarten met tips

Om te bekijken en terug te hangen

Teacher engagement

For the student evaluation (school B), approximately 40 students of varying ages and educational types were introduced to Ways to Well-being in an informal setting within the school canteen. Two teachers at this school shared their stories on the Ways to Well-being templates. Before the teachers got involved, the school expressed interest in implementing Ways to Well-being as a showcase in the school canteen as part of the school's theme week on self-love. This resulted in several insights.

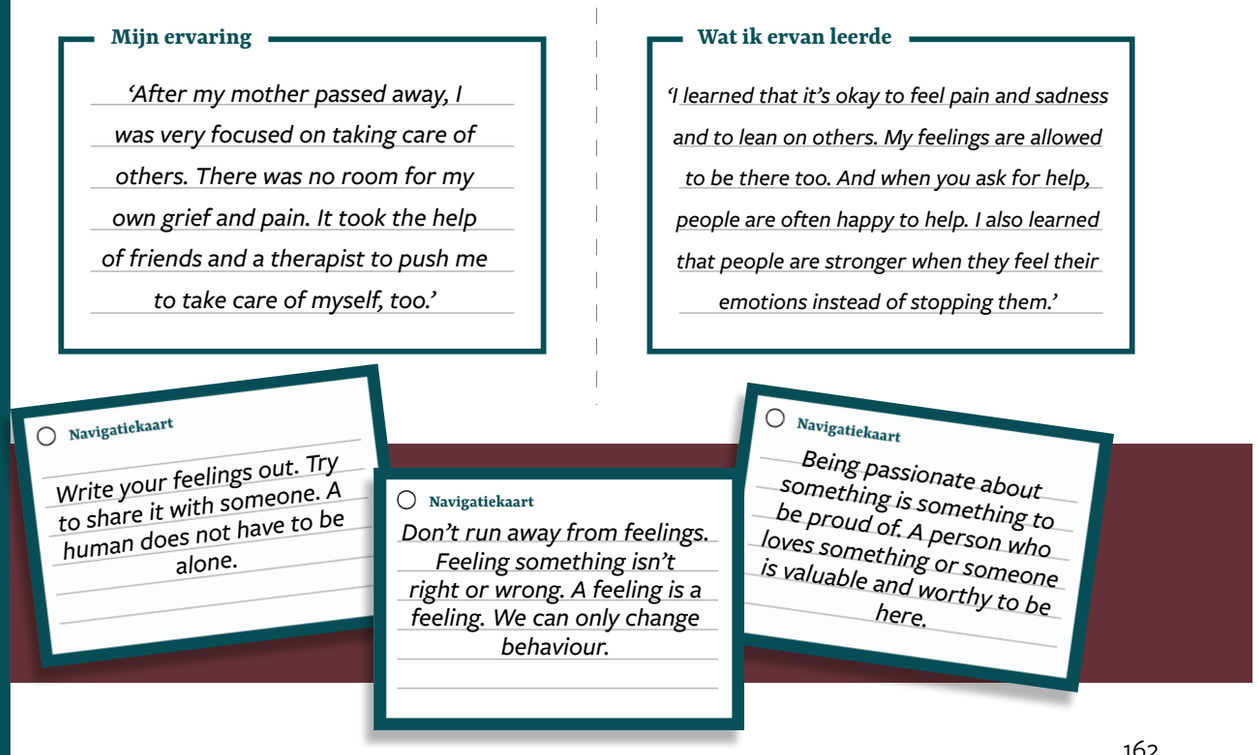
A short and sweet explanation to the school

The explanation to the school, so before introducing teachers to the product, could be improved. At the school, in-person clarification was required to communicate that the task was less time-consuming than it may have seemed in the first email. Once the person responsible for recruiting teachers saw the small paper templates in person and realised the task was feasible, recruitment became easier.

Instruction and outcomes to teachers

Two teachers contributed to the final student evaluation by creating stories and three related navigation cards each. Both wrote very personal stories and kindly consented to having their materials included in this report. They did not receive direct instruction from the designer; instead, they used the instruction booklet as guidance. Overall, this suggests the booklet is clear enough for teachers to complete the task independently.

The stories and navigation cards, translated to English, are shown.





Size and materials

One teacher fitted their story exactly into the 'experience' and 'learnings' template, while the other needed slightly more space. That said, limited space may also be beneficial, as it prevents teachers from writing stories that are too long and potentially less appealing to students. The navigation cards provided enough space for teachers to write advice, suggesting the card format is appropriate. The material seemed good; it stayed clean and without folds or scratches.

The teacher's experience in sharing insights

Unfortunately, there was no time to interview the participating teachers about their experience of sharing. During the exposition, however, three additional teachers spontaneously started writing advice on navigation cards for students to take home. Although students did not take these cards, this still indicates interest among more teachers and suggests that once the concept is familiar within the school, implementation and recruitment may become easier.


Wegen naar welzijn: docenten over zelfliefde
Naam:
Naam:
Navigatiekaarten met tips
Navigatiekaarten met tips
Wat vind jy van het zien van de ervaring van je docent?
LEUK / interessant:
Wat vind je er leuk aan?
Wat vind je er niet leuk aan?


zelf liefde

Student feedback

Overall, approximately 40 students have read the stories with full attention. Of these students, 26 (50% male) were asked in a brief, informal conversation what they did and did not like about the concept and whether they would like to see a similar thing from their other teachers. The outcomes examine whether the concept helped teachers enact the three role-model functions for student well-being by fostering interaction, identity, and resilience.

Interaction qualities

Several interactions prompted by Ways to Well-being became apparent during the session: curiosity, interest, respect, conversation, and empathy. These are discussed first, along with the interaction qualities (the beneficial aspects of the design that have prompted these interactions) that will help us understand the valuable aspects of the design.

Curiosity, being drawn towards Ways to Well-being

Some needed encouragement to start reading; others were drawn to the board out of curiosity about something novel in their canteen or seeing the teachers' names. About 5 students who had come near the notice board walked away uninterested when the researcher explained what it said. This mostly happened at the beginning of the session, during the first break, before students realised what was on the notice board; they were more shy and less likely to approach it. Later, larger friend groups approached, and many of them invited their friends to read, too. This showed especially during the second break, when several groups of students came back to show their friends the stories. Most students were in groups of two to six people; only a few who read the stories were alone. If they were alone, they were usually part of the friend groups that had encouraged them to go up to the notice board and read it.

Overall, this suggests curiosity was supported by visible cues (teacher names, novelty in a familiar place) and peer cueing (friends encouraging each other to look).

> *"I want you to read this, the experience of Mister [name]"*
>
> - Student (M) in the canteen, to his friends.

> *'Look at this, it's so sad... Really bad'*
>
> – Student showing the teachers' stories to her friends.

Interest, keeping the students engaged

Of the 13 students who placed a sticker on the feedback board after reading, 12 voted "interesting/nice to see the experience of my teacher," and only 1 voted "uninteresting/not nice." Furthermore, 25 of the 26 students who were spoken to in the smaller conversations said they found it interesting and would be interested in seeing more of their teachers' experiences in this way. The one student who had placed a sticker in the 'not nice/boring' category came back to read the story again.

Once students realised what was on the board, they came back to read it again, and conversations indicated that they would become even more interested when different teachers shared their stories.

These findings suggest that once students understood what Ways to Well-being was, they were intrinsically motivated to engage with it, especially when it involved teachers they recognised. At the same time, no one wrote a navigation card to take home. This was expected in this canteen setting, where making a navigation card was neither mandatory nor encouraged, and where it may feel socially "uncool" to write a takeaway for yourself. Whether this would be different in a mentor class setting should be tested. For now, we can conclude that this aspect of the design did not attract participation in this context.

> *'I would like to see more from other teachers: they know all about us, but we know nothing about them! So it's really interesting to know more about them, too.'*
>
> – Student (F)

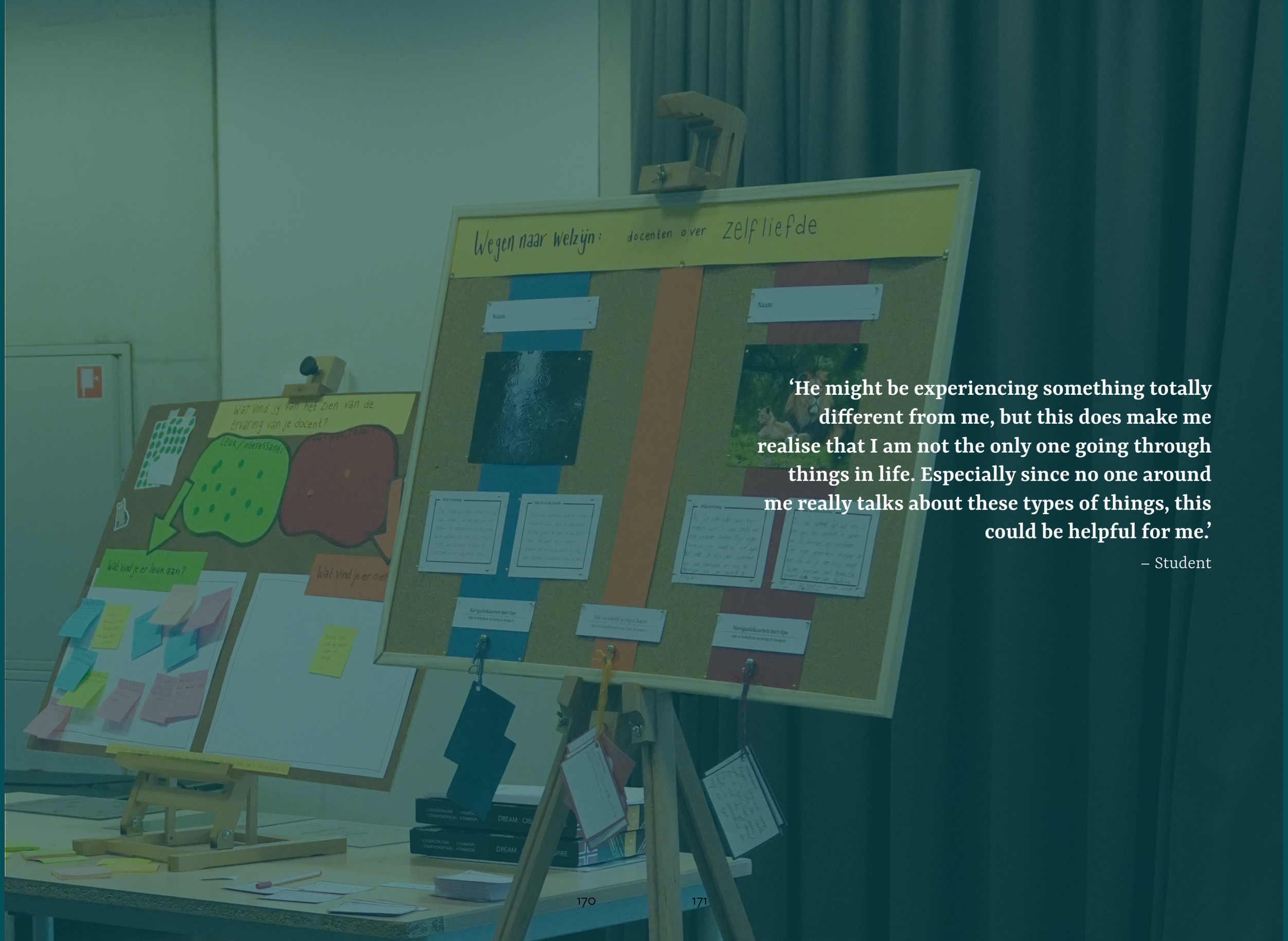
> *'Usually, you only see the teacher, who sometimes is quite emotionless. Now, you also see their personal life a bit more. I would like to see it more often, because it helps you empathise with them and to get an insight into their lives.'*
>
> – Student (F)

> *'Interesting that they can also share a personal story, and to read what they are feeling and thinking'*
>
> – Student

Respect

The board was approached with a playful attitude at first, but actually reading and realising what the stories were about made students more serious and respectful. Students were really impressed by the teachers' vulnerability and thought they were brave and strong to share these stories. Redirecting friends to read the stories was also done with a lot of respect, in a serious, genuinely interested way.

At the same time, four students mentioned that this respect depends on the class and on the students; one student even said he would be the one to start laughing about it if it were discussed in a mentor class. So, this respectful environment is not guaranteed. Since the design makes teacher vulnerability visible, the social context (group norms and how the activity is introduced) matters for psychological safety for both teachers and students. Interestingly, it seemed that respect was supported by the quality and depth of the teacher's story (because the teacher shared something deep, the students respected the teacher).



‘He might be experiencing something totally different from me, but this does make me realise that I am not the only one going through things in life. Especially since no one around me really talks about these types of things, this could be helpful for me.’

– Student

'My buddy said, "You really need to read that story, it's really pitiful." So in our friend group, we are respectful and understanding. But some students would have less respect, and then it could be vulnerable for the teacher.'

– Student (M)

'I don't care about it. I would be that person who got sent out of class because I would start to laugh about it'

– Student (M)

'It depends on the group and on the school whether people are going to be serious with this.'

– Student (F)

'I think it is deep, it's interesting and pitiful and deep at the same time. It's impressive that they dare to share this, I wouldn't dare to myself.'

– Student (M)

Conversations about well-being

Students talked about the stories they had read long after reading them. This indicates that the concept can foster conversations about students' well-being. Since talking about well-being is regarded as desirable behaviour (e.g., sharing emotions, checking in with peers, or normalising help-seeking), it remains a significant outcome of the interaction.

Empathy for the teacher

Nearly all (96%) students who were asked what they thought while reading the experiences said they found them sad (*zielig* in Dutch). They felt empathy for the teacher who shared their experience. Most did not think it was too deep or too sad; they appreciated the teachers' openness. When asked if reading these stories was helpful, five students specifically mentioned that it helped them develop greater empathy for teachers and better understand what they experience.

'It's sad, yeah, really heartbreaking. I really didn't know he went through something like this.'

– Student (M)

'I think even though it is sad, it's good for students to read this because it gives more understanding and empathy for the teacher.'

– Student (M)

'You see the teacher always cheerful in the classroom, and now you also see which flashbacks they might have.'

– Student (F)

This suggests a potential relational benefit for teachers: when students empathise more with a teacher, it may influence how they interpret teacher behaviour and how they behave in class. For the design, this indicates the described experiences should not be too heavy. The goal is for students to feel empathy and understanding, not to start worrying about the teacher. While that did not seem to happen in this example, the line between empathy and worry varies from person to person. Therefore, it would be valuable to test how reading about these experiences affects students' longer-term feelings (whether it stays supportive rather than burdensome).

'Ohh, now I feel bad for acting that way in his class'

– Student (F)

'Teachers are also just people, we tend to forget that sometimes.'

– Student (F)

Identity

Two students mentioned that they would not have shared something like this themselves, as they are not the type to openly discuss issues. For these students, reading stories like these could be especially valuable, as they might not otherwise be exposed to people who talk about difficult experiences. Seeing a teacher share something personal can offer recognition and permission: it shows that opening up is something someone like them can do, and it shows how to do so. This can set a norm of sharing (especially if it is also unusual at home or in their friend group) and introduce a different self-image: they may start to see themselves not only as 'someone who keeps things to themselves', but also as someone who can share when it matters. Even if it does not lead to more sharing, it may still shape identity in a smaller way by helping them realise that someone who usually appears cheerful can also struggle, making emotional complexity feel more normal and acceptable.

'He might be experiencing something totally different from me, but this does make me realise that I am not the only one going through things in life. Especially since no one around me really talks about these types of things, this could be helpful.'

– Student (F)

'It would be nice to see more of teachers, because you don't know them personally. It would help to see that they are also going through these things.'

– Student

'I think it is beautiful to see that teachers are also humans outside of their work and dare to share this!'

– Student (F)

Resilience

When asked whether students believed reading this could help them strengthen resilience, responses were varied. Some students said no, because they had not experienced anything similar and therefore could not learn much from it. They suggested that it might help others facing similar challenges to those described, or help them in the future. One student explicitly said she liked that this sets an example of how you could get through tough times. Another student appreciated seeing that the teacher chose the right path after his setback, a good, resilient example as well.

> *'It doesn't help me, because the pain that he felt, I haven't had that. Nevertheless, it is interesting and deep, and pitiful.'*
>
> – Student (M)

> *'It can really help to see this, because you know he is so strong to get through this, and in that way he shows that you can also get through these things yourself'*
>
> – Student (F)

> *'They go through something; you can choose the wrong path after that, but he chose the right path, and that is really good. Respect!'*
>
> – Student (M)

Conclusion

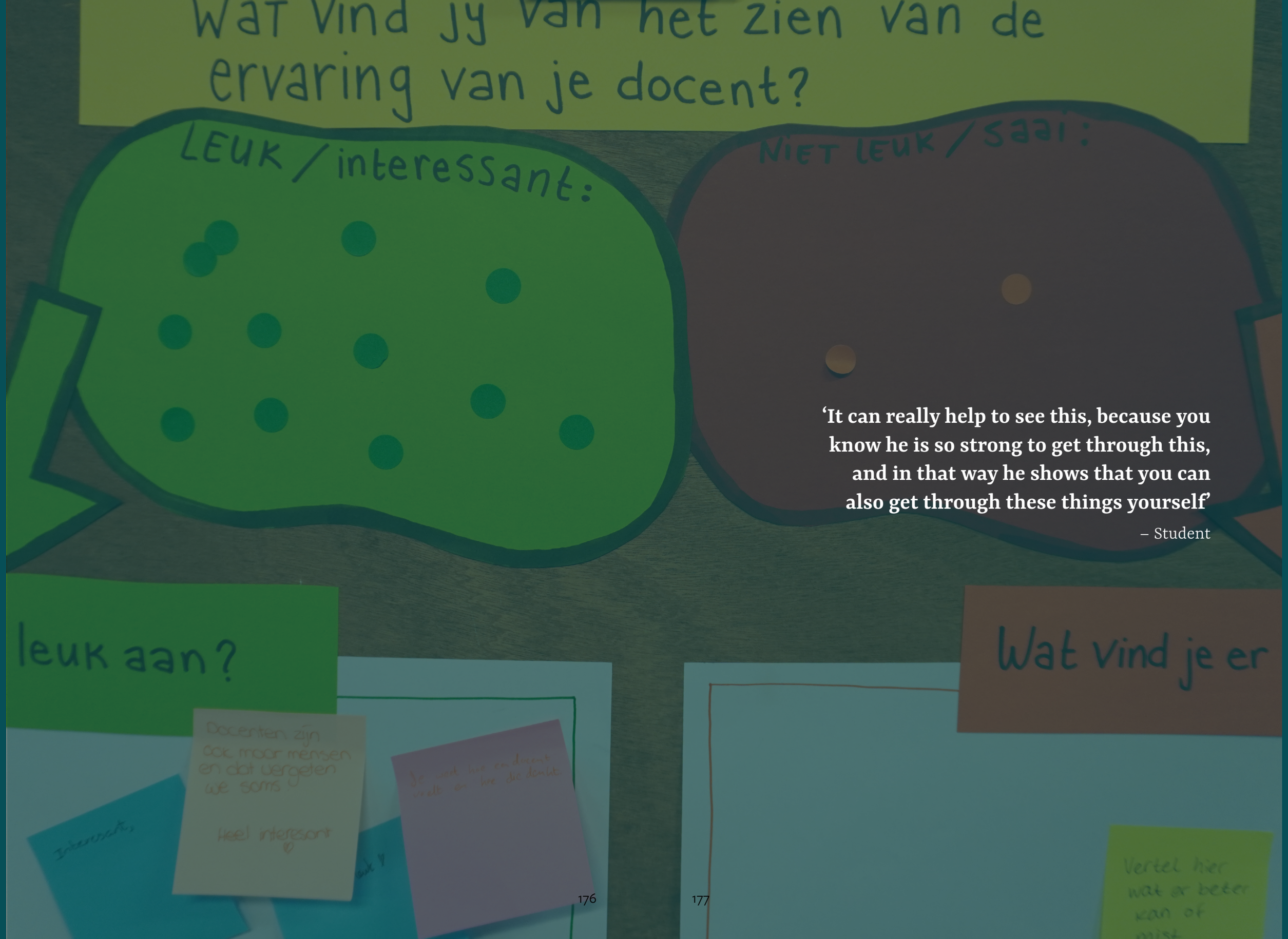
Overall, the evaluation outcomes were positive. Teachers at school A have expressed interest in the product, noting that it demonstrates personality towards students in an approachable, low-threshold manner. They appreciate that it promotes connection and reveals their human side. They believe it's a good idea to implement the Ways to Well-being in a mentor class. Their main remaining request was to involve students in selecting the destination, and their main concern was the safety of sharing a vulnerable story.

Teachers at school B understood the assignment and wrote very meaningful, engaging stories. Students were curious and interested, and they indicated they wanted to see more stories from their teachers. They showed respect and empathy for the teachers, started conversations about well-being, and mentioned that this could help them understand how the teachers were feeling. The stories thus evoked interaction. Furthermore, teachers could shift norms in showing and speaking up about feelings and experiences, showing students that they are not alone if they are going through something as well and tapping into their identity. Students indicated that it could support their resilience by offering practical examples.

Implications for future designing

In the design, several aspects became clear as key factors supporting the interaction qualities. They should be considered when further developing this concept.

- Template size: story templates need to be short enough to stay readable for students, while giving teachers slightly more space to write naturally within the experience and learning structure.
- Teacher name as cue: displaying the teacher's name is required to spark curiosity and recognition.
- Consistency in visual identity: a consistent layout and colour system is needed so students quickly recognise the concept over time, which may support repeated engagement.
- Social context and facilitation: social opportunities (such as respectful peer cueing, group norms, and guarded introduction) are essential and should be actively fostered before and during implementation to ensure psychological safety and respectful engagement.
- Content boundaries: Teacher experiences should be meaningful and relatable, but not so heavy that students feel burdened or start worrying about the teacher. A practical guideline is that students should be able to take away a learning without feeling responsible for the teacher's well-being.



‘It can really help to see this, because you know he is so strong to get through this, and in that way he shows that you can also get through these things yourself’

– Student


Wegen naar Welzijn: docenten over zelfliefde
Naam:
Naam:
Navigatiekaarten met tips
Navigatiekaarten met tips
Pak en schrijf je eigen kaart
Wat vind jij van het zien van de ervaring van je docent?
LEUK / interessant:
Wat vind je er leuk aan?
Wat vind je er niet leuk aan?

6.4 IMPLEMENTATION AND FUTURE ITERATIONS

Below, the recommendations for implementing Ways to Well-being and further developing the tool will be explored. In the next chapter, the recommendations for future research are highlighted.

Implementation

There are three recommendations for implementing Ways to Well-being in schools.

Teacher workload

Teachers already have a heavy workload, and even though it is a small task, Ways to Well-being is another to-do. Therefore, it is recommended that schools provide sufficient time and resources for teachers to implement it properly.

Teacher training

Teacher training has been shown to be beneficial before implementing a well-being intervention (Mason et al., 2025). Therefore, it is recommended that schools provide training for teachers if this has not already been done.

Guidance for issues

If issues arise from Ways to Well-being, there must be a solid action plan at school for teachers to follow. For example, in one school, teachers had an email address where they could confidentially discuss certain matters and brainstorm the best next steps when a student approached them with an issue.

> *'As teachers, we now also have an email address where you can freely ask anonymous questions about a pupil, so that you have someone to discuss the best course of action with.'*
>
> – Laurien, teacher

Future Development

To develop the tool further, these are the recommended next steps to take.

Social vulnerability

Vulnerability might be the most important next step to consider. Social opportunities (such as social norms in class, proper introductions, and guidance) should be enhanced to ensure that students act respectfully toward teachers' stories and foster a safe environment. Ideally, an ideation step would be made to add elements that foster these social norms before implementation.

Finding destinations with students

As became clear from the teacher evaluation, it would be preferable to involve students in finding the destination. This is a recommended step for schools implementing Ways to Well-being and could be considered in future design iterations.

Implementation within an existing intervention

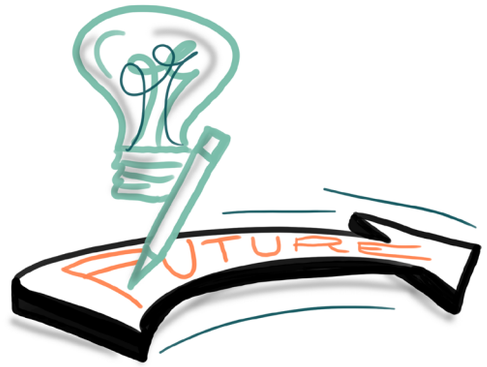
The concept could be implemented in an existing intervention, such as PSIEG. In general, it could already be beneficial for teachers to share more about their own experiences when teaching students about well-being-related topics. Implementing Ways to Well-being in these lessons would provide clearer guidance for teachers to do so. Furthermore, integrating into an existing initiative would be an easy way to distribute the product to schools, according to teachers during one of the evaluation sessions.

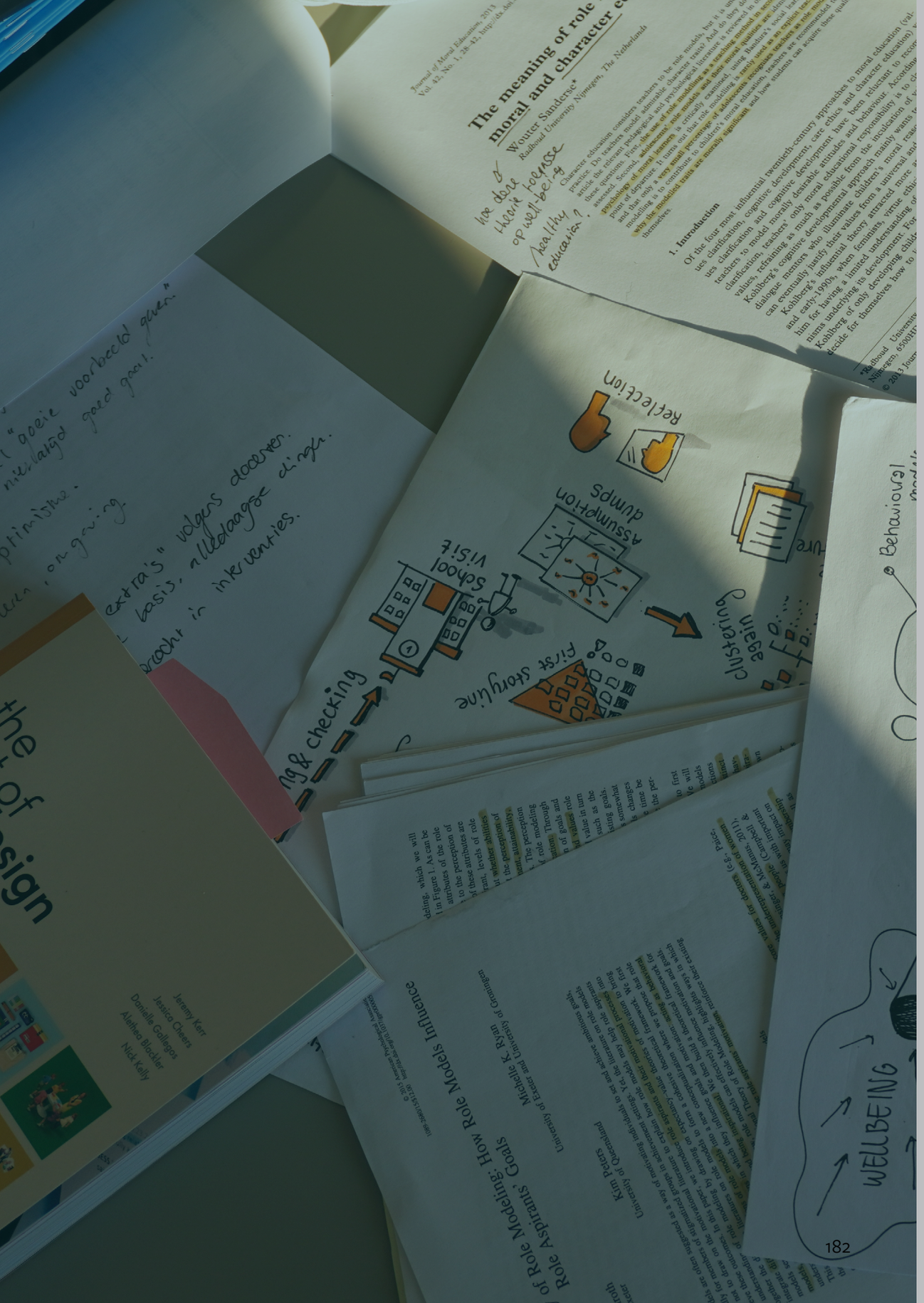
Content boundaries

The stories should not become a burden for students; therefore, it is recommended that teachers be provided with guidelines for selecting their experiences and for phrasing them. It would be interesting to work together with a psychologist or certified trainer to develop this guideline.

Size and material

It is recommended to test the size of Ways to Well-being, especially the space the teacher now has to write their experience and learning. It needs to be tested on a larger sample to determine whether there is enough space to write.





7. CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

In this chapter, recommendations will be provided for further concept development, future research and for Healthy Start specific. Furthermore, the research limitations and reflection will be discussed.

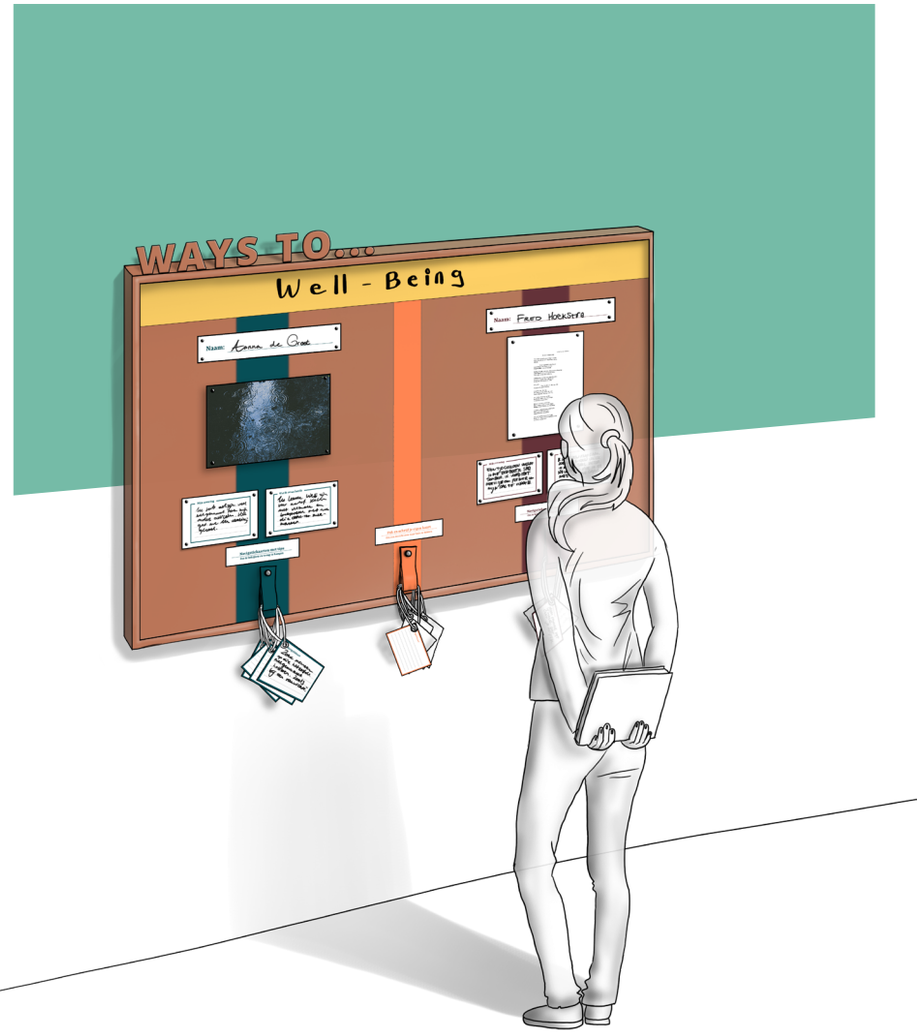
7.1 PROJECT CONCLUSION

The project aimed to explore the potential of secondary school teachers as role models for youth well-being in the Netherlands. Based on several theories, we defined a design challenge: supporting teachers in this function as potential role models, by (1) making teachers aware of their potential as role models, (2) creating tools for the teacher to actually being able to implement the role model theories explicitly and intentionally, and through (3) getting students to see their teachers as role models.

Through extensive fieldwork, we have identified three main components that can help a teacher become a role model for enhancing youth well-being: resilience, identity, and interaction. Both students and teachers have recognised these components as valuable parts of role modelling. Demonstrating human resilience can change norms and offer students strategies for handling stress and setbacks; showing a unique identity can strengthen self-confidence and help students discover who they want to be; modelling interaction can foster relationships among students, teachers, and peers. These are all important support factors for well-being (Green et al., 2022; Peeters et al., 2022).

With the insights, we have designed a tool for teachers to explicitly and intentionally showcase one or more of these three components, so they can act as behavioural models, representations of the possible, or sources of inspiration for their students. This tool, called Ways to Well-being, was evaluated with over 30 teachers and students, resulting in meaningful insights to shape future design and research. It sparked interest, curiosity, and conversations among students, and teachers sharing their human side was received positively by both students and teachers.

By implementing Ways to Well-being, the teacher becomes more aware of their potential as role model for well-being. While whether students perceive a teacher as a role model depends on personal and contextual factors, this research indicates that different teachers can be role models for different personalities and therefore each contribute to youth well-being in their own ways. This might be especially valuable for students who lack role models in their families; teachers can provide different norms, mindsets and behaviour. By being vulnerable and showing students how to care for their well-being, teachers can set an example, foster relatedness, and encourage conversations about well-being as a norm. This may, in turn, improve students' capabilities, opportunities, and motivation to care for their well-being and encourage healthy behaviour.





By showing human **resilience**, unique **identity**, and personal **interaction**, teachers and other role models could help support youth well-being, strengthen their self-confidence, and foster a sense of being good enough.

7.2 DISCUSSION

This discussion links Ways to Well-being and the research outcomes to the project's aim and the theoretical foundation used in this study. It first discusses implications for Healthy Start, then turns to theories, limitations, and the use of AI, and ends with recommendations for future research.

Implications for Healthy Start

This research can be used by Healthy Start to inform policymakers, partners and schools about the implementation of well-being initiatives and the influence of role models and teachers in this. Furthermore, the research provides insights into the values of both youth and teachers regarding role modelling, vulnerability, and resilience. The three overlapping themes of resilience, identity, and interaction can help Healthy Start to communicate the impact that teachers as role models have on well-being. Ways to Well-being can be used as a tool for teachers to practice their role as role models; Healthy Start could point schools and teachers to this resource. Furthermore, the exhibition component can be used independently at events Healthy Start is a part of, like in the final student evaluation, to stimulate discussions on the role model topic.

Theoretical foundation

Next, we will discuss the research outcomes by reviewing theories of well-being and role models, then COM-B and Self-Determination Theory, and conclude with the psychological and social implications of Ways to Well-being and a point regarding our design goal.

Well-being support factors

The systemic, surrounding, and individual support factors for youth well-being, as defined by Peeters et al. (2022) in Chapter 2, are shown again in Figure 7.1, with the support factors highlighted that this concept taps into. We can see that Ways to Well-Being has the potential to support well-being on different levels: through a supportive school environment, by supporting the relationship with the teacher and interactions with peers, and on the individual level: by fostering resilience, self-efficacy, self-view, connection with school, by providing effective coping strategies and encouraging a healthy lifestyle.

Well-being responsibility

The teacher can be a valuable influence in a student's life. Furthermore, theories have shown that school plays a significant role in their perceived pressure and stress. However, this research does not aim to imply that the teacher is solely responsible for the youth's well-being, as there are many other factors into play. Rather, it shows to strengthen the teacher's role and appreciation from the student perspective, and to make use of the life experiences teachers already have.

Mental health 'issues'

As stated in the introduction, talking about mental health as 'issues' or 'problems' can cause a self-fulfilling prophecy and worsen mild symptoms of distress (Foulkes & Andrews, 2023). Talking about well-being is important for breaking taboos and preparing youth for their future. Therefore, it is important that Ways to Well-being shares lessons and concrete ways to strengthen resilience, rather than focusing solely on sharing an experience (especially if the experience is negative).

Expectations outside of school

As stated in the theoretical foundation, expectations outside of school are increasing, which could be one of the causes that well-being is decreasing. Ways to well-being will not change expectations outside of school; however, students could learn how to manage them. They learn a resilient mindset from their teacher that could help them feel more at ease with the priorities they set and deal with pressure. Furthermore, as Ways to Well-being can address aspects of identity, it could strengthen self-confidence and help students make better choices about their priorities, who they are, and what really matters to them for feeling good.

Role models shape choices, expectations and the sense of being 'good enough'

Role models can influence what students think is normal and whether they feel good enough. Dopmeijer et al. (2023) argued that role models in higher education help shape students' identity, choices, and expectations by setting norms, and this taps into the components defined in this research: resilience, identity, and interaction.

When students see resilience in real stories, it can widen their view of what life can look like. It also signals that struggling or needing help is normal, and that insecurity is not something you have to hide. An example that was seen in the evaluation with students: if a teacher shares that they have had a difficult period and found their way through it, that can feel more realistic than the 'everything is fine' version students

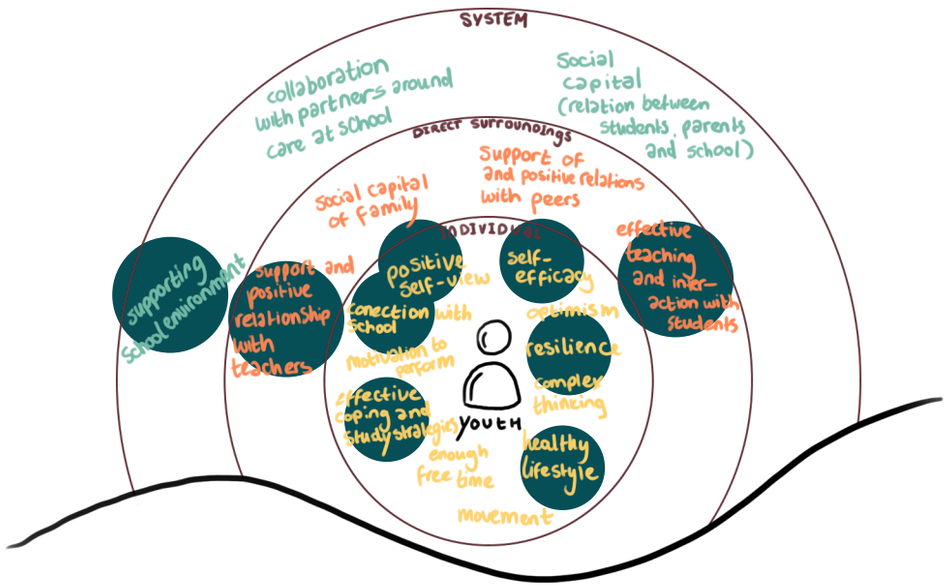


Figure 7.1: Support factors as defined by Peeters et al. (2022), with highlighted potential of Ways to Well-being

often see online, and it can help them feel less alone on their bad days. Another example: if a student sees that the teacher chose the 'right path' after a setback, this could encourage them to do the same.

Role models also shape expectations by showing identity: that people are different and that there is no one right way to be. Personal stories can give students language for who they are and the choice to deal with things in ways that fit them. For instance, seeing a teacher openly talk about seeking support, especially if that is not common in a student's family or friend group, can make it feel more acceptable and reinforce the idea that they are worthy of help as they are.

Finally, role models can show different ways of interacting. That helps students imagine their future relationships and feel more confident in their own social style. Small actions matter here, too: if a student feels socially insecure but a teacher still notices them and includes them, that can strengthen their feeling of being seen and being good enough.

Role model theories

The findings in this research identified what being a role model could mean for a teacher, why it is important for well-being, and how role modelling can be done, building on the research of Sanderse (2012). The three recurring components give clearer guidance on what role modelling can look like in practice and why it matters. Ways to Well-Being is not just a tool to support the teacher in their role as a role model; it also functions as a conversation starter among students and was perceived to spark interest and curiosity.

When looking back at the role model theory of Morgenroth et al. (2015), Ways to Well-being could support the teacher's role as a behavioural model, as it explicitly includes behavioural aspects of resilience (what the teacher has learned and what students can practically do). It can also serve as a representation of the possible, as teachers' stories show that everyone struggles with well-being sometimes and can still get through it. Lastly, it can be a source of inspiration: by showing examples of coping, reflection, and vulnerability, the tool may lower the threshold for students to share their own experiences as well.

Implications for other role models

The project has shown that a resilient mindset, ways of being and ways of interacting with others are important functions of role models for Dutch youth. This indicates that these three components are important not only for teachers but also for other role models, such as family, friends, and others who surround youth, when seeking to improve youth well-being. When it is realised that these influence what youth perceive as role models, they can be used more explicitly. Furthermore, these components may not apply only to youth role models: perhaps teachers can also be role models for one another by sharing their vulnerabilities.

COM-B model

The COM-B model (Michie et al., 2011) is reflected in the design, as it taps into capabilities, opportunities, and motivation of students. Ways to Well-being provides practical tools and tips that can enhance capability, by showing concrete strategies students could try. This might happen partly unconsciously: students might not realise they need a specific insight when they read it, but recognising themselves in a situation or seeing a clear way of dealing with something could still spark ideas and inspiration. In addition, the tool creates both social and physical opportunity for well-being to be discussed, by introducing a structured moment and language to talk about it. Lastly, motivation may be supported in different ways: seeing a teacher's experience can make the topic feel more relevant and normal, and it may evoke emotions that tap into automatic motivation, while also strengthening more reflective motivation to work on well-being.

Self-Determination Theory

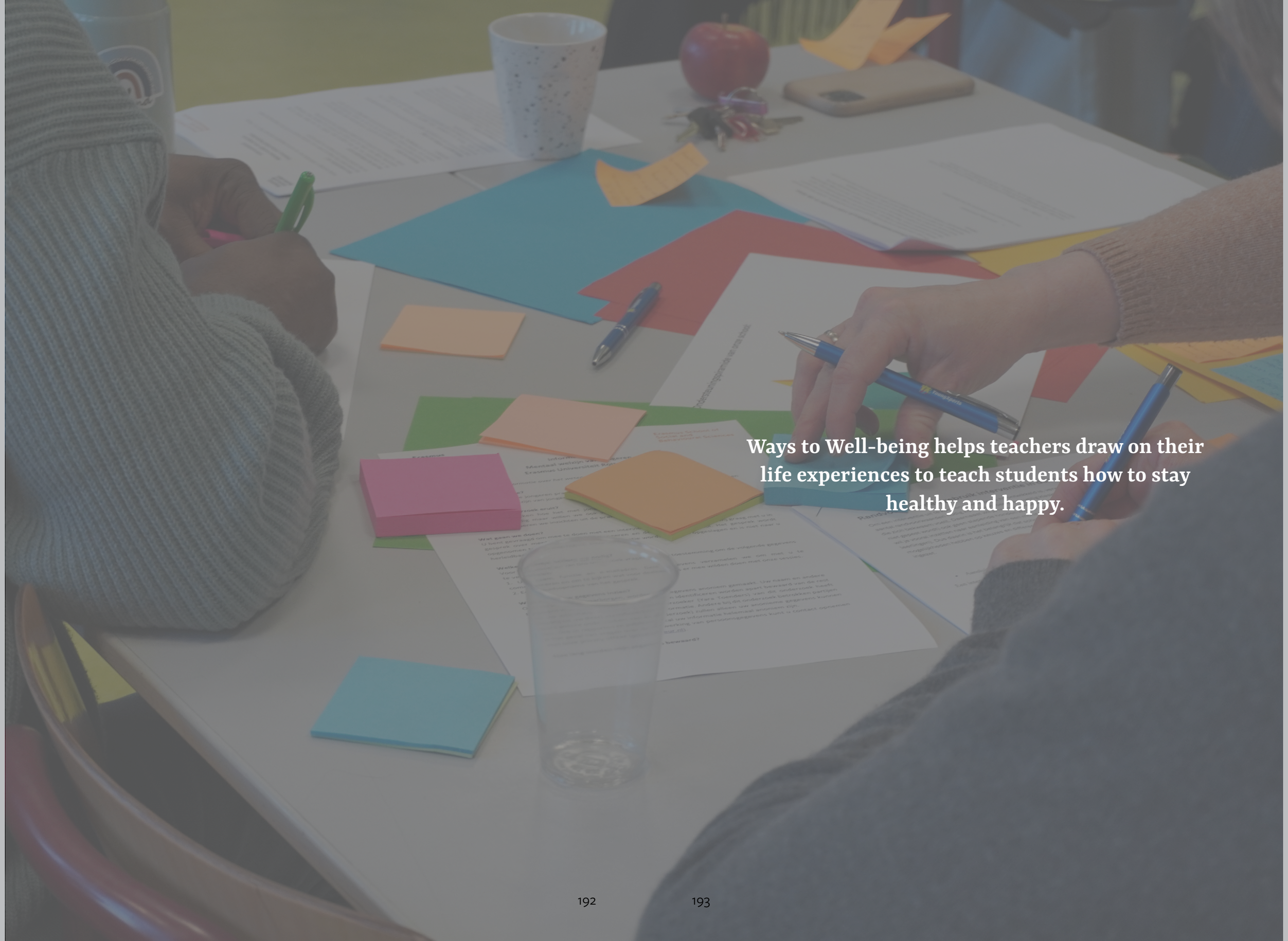
Furthermore, the concept connects to Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Ways to Well-being shows more than one 'way' to well-being, so students can choose the behaviour or mindset they feel connected to and write their main insights on their navigation card, which supports autonomy. Relatedness can be fostered when students recognise themselves in a teacher's story and when the tool prompts interaction and peer sharing. Competence is supported through the concrete tips and strategies offered to students, which can help them feel more able to take action.

Psychological and social implications

Beyond the theoretical fit, the concept also has potential psychological and social implications. Psychologically, Ways to Well-Being (and showing the three defined components) may normalise 'being human' and can offer insights or strategies that could help students in times of struggle. It shows what social media sometimes lacks: that setbacks are part of life and that you are not alone in your experiences. Socially, Ways to Well-being encourages talking about more difficult life experiences and sharing what they might mean to someone. It can foster empathy and understanding between students and teachers, as well as strengthen connections between them.

Supporting teachers

An important point to consider relates to our design goal of "supporting teachers in their function as potential role models for youth well-being." Although the concept likely supports teachers in enacting this role more explicitly, Ways to Well-being also adds an extra task. In that sense, it is not automatically "supportive," as it may increase workload and pressure in an already demanding job, thereby complicating implementation. Whether Ways to Well-being feels supportive for teachers will likely depend on the time, resources, and facilitation that the school provides (e.g., space in the mentor class and preparation time). In addition, it may depend on students' responses to teachers' shared experiences: if students react unseriously or disrespectfully, the activity could feel exposing rather than supportive for teachers.



Ways to Well-being helps teachers draw on their life experiences to teach students how to stay healthy and happy.

Limitations

While these outcomes seem encouraging overall, they should be interpreted in light of the study's 100-day scope and setup. The evaluation captured short-term perceptions and experiences and did not measure long-term behavioural change or well-being outcomes. There were several limitations to the research and design.

Selection bias

The teachers who were open to an interview about youth well-being were already interested in the topic. Therefore, the sample might not reflect the opinions of teachers who are only to some extent, or not at all, interested in their students' mental well-being. Because of the limited time available for this study, it was not possible to recruit a bigger and more representative sample of teachers and their interests.

For the final student evaluation, there was likely selection bias as well. Only some students left a sticker; those who did had already approached the concept and may have been more interested in it. Students who were uninterested may also have been uninterested in leaving feedback. In addition, informal conversations mainly took place with students who had approached the board rather than those who did not.

Geography

The school visited for the two most elaborate co-creation sessions, which yielded insights into the youth perspective on role models and teacher qualities, is in an area with high socioeconomic status. This might be reflected in the student input.

Age and gender

Because of the limited time and scope of this research, slightly more experienced male teachers were selected than is representative of the wider teacher population. As younger teachers might have a different perspective on role modelling, and a larger share of secondary school teachers are female, this should be considered when interpreting the results. For example, views on role modelling and the teacher-student relationship might differ by age and gender, which could have influenced the insights and design direction.

Ideation

The insights from the teacher and expert interviews, as well as from the desk research, emerged alongside the ideation process. Therefore, not all insights were fully defined yet when ideation was already going on. For example, the three factors identified as a teacher's function as a role model for well-being – resilience, identity, and interaction – were defined quite late in the ideation phase. This led to a somewhat unstructured approach to ideation, which could have influenced the exploration and selection of ideas and concepts.

Canteen setting

The evaluation took place in a busy canteen during breaks. This context likely influenced engagement and responses due to time pressure and the presence of peers. Peer influence may have increased participation (e.g., by encouraging students to look), but it may also have reduced willingness to take more personal actions (e.g., writing a navigation card) or to express negative opinions.

Limited amount of schools

The student evaluation was conducted at a single school. School cultures, norms, and student–teacher relationships can vary widely, so the findings may not generalise to other schools or contexts.

Two teacher contributions

Only two teachers contributed stories for the final evaluation (both male; age unknown). Their writing style, topic choice, perceived credibility, and existing relationship with students may have influenced student responses. Findings may differ with other teachers, subjects, or story types.

Social desirability bias

All feedback about ideas and concepts was collected in direct conversations with the designer. Although responses appeared sincere, teachers and students may have been more positive out of politeness or because they felt observed.

Control conditions

Although interaction, identity, resilience, the COM-B model, and the role model functions were used as an analytical framework to interpret the final findings, the evaluation did not include a pre–post baseline, a comparison condition, or standardised outcome measures of student well-being or related behaviours.

Change in role models is not measured

Due to time constraints, this study did not test whether implementing Ways to Well-being leads students to actually perceive their teachers as role models more often (or more strongly) over time.

Recommended future research

The limitations indicate that further research is needed to substantiate the theory and concept presented. Next, recommendations for strengthening the theoretical foundation and for testing and implementing Ways to Well-being will be provided, which will be of interest to researchers and designers who want to further explore role modelling in youth education.

Qualities of role models

For further research, it is recommended to examine the qualities of youth's current role models (resilient mindset, identity, interaction) more closely, and how youth attempt to adopt these qualities themselves, in a bigger sample, at multiple schools (as also suggested by Sanderse, 2012), as the insights from youth on these three components have been retrieved from just two schools.

Self-disclosure

As part of the vulnerability of the teacher, more research is needed on Teacher Self-Disclosure, as being vulnerable can have the opposite effect when implemented poorly (Cayanus & Martin, 2008). Teachers' evaluations and literature both show that professional boundaries should be in place, and that the student-teacher relationship is a fragile balance between authority and bonding (García-Moya et al., 2019).

Pilot test in mentor class, at different schools

The final research was conducted in a canteen setting. This is different from the intended context of use. Therefore, it is recommended to test the product in a mentor class setting as well, including the class setup where students engage in conversations. After this class, it is recommended to speak with students in smaller groups about their experiences and potential improvements to the class and its setup.

A particularly interesting part of this pilot test should be the students' navigation cards, which were not filled in by any student during the final evaluation. It is recommended to test if they will be filled in in the mentor class setting, with a bit more encouragement and time. Additionally, it needs to be tested whether students benefit from this specific action, whether they will misuse the materials, and whether simply opening the conversation is enough to benefit them.

It is also recommended to test the effects over a longer period, for example, by conducting a pilot with a school over one year. There needs to be regular, structured feedback moments to ensure the communication of insights. It is recommended to do that in multiple schools across the country, in both urban and rural areas, to identify implementation considerations for each school. Furthermore, the implementation should be tested with a larger sample of teachers to ensure safe and beneficial outcomes.

In-depth qual teacher evaluation

There was insufficient time to engage in qualitative discussions with teachers about their experiences in completing their stories. It is recommended to reflect on this experience with the teachers to ensure it was meaningful for them and to improve it if necessary. For example, teachers could complete the full sequence of activities and evaluate whether each step was necessary, helpful, or could be shortened. Especially the need to complete the reflection form, to be more intentional and explicit about role modelling, needs to be tested. This step adds considerable time for teachers, while the exact benefits have not been verified.

Long-term well-being outcomes

Long-term outcomes for student and teacher well-being have not been examined. It would be interesting to find out whether students have initiated discussions with the teacher about their experiences after reading their stories in the exposition. This could not be verified due to time limitations. Furthermore, it is recommended to assess whether the sadness or triggers students experience while reading the stories do not worsen their worries or undermine their well-being. It should benefit them, not add a burden. A way to do this would be to speak with the students and teacher again, a day or a few days later, to see how they feel about it and how their interactions have been. Ideally, this would be done in a one-on-one conversation, in a safe environment free from peer pressure, so students and teacher can openly share their true feelings.

Furthermore, it is recommended to test the concept using pre–post measures and standardised well-being outcome measures, such as the Multidimensional Wellbeing in Youth Scale by Green et al. (2022), to evaluate potential effects on student well-being and related behaviours more coherently.

Long-term role model outcomes

In future research, implement Ways to Well-being over a longer period and measure whether students' perceptions of teachers as role models change. This can be assessed by asking students to identify role models both in the moment and in retrospect, since role model recognition may occur after a certain period of time (Sanderse, 2012).

Timing and group size

During fieldwork, some students mentioned that discussing their well-being is not something they like to do in a class setting. Moreover, not all mentor groups, especially in the higher grades (3rd to 6th), are that close, as students sometimes do not share any other subjects with their classmates and often skip mentor class. Therefore, it is recommended to delve deeper into the optimal timing and group size for implementing Ways to Well-being (or similar interventions) from a student perspective.

A note on the use of AI

AI was utilised to improve spelling, grammar, wording, and translations. It was furthermore used to discover relevant literature and existing initiatives. However, all AI-generated content has been manually checked and refined. No full paragraphs were produced by AI.

7.3 REFLECTION

In this section, I will reflect on the project from a personal side. I will discuss the learning goals set in the beginning, and the personal learnings.

Learning goals

Even though I faced several challenges throughout the project, I am very proud of what I delivered. I have co-created with teachers and youth, contributed to Healthy Start research with meaningful insights, built networks, and made friends. I have had extremely interesting and valuable conversations with teachers from secondary schools in parts of the country I have never been to, to my own secondary school, to my dance school, and with the teachers at my university. Furthermore, I have connected with youth, engaging with their world. That was what I enjoyed most: finding these connections by simply explaining the project's aim or going out in the field.

I have achieved my learning goals. I have improved my skills as a project manager, designer, and communicator. I have incorporated creativity and aesthetics into the end product, though I would have liked to include more drawings and schematic visuals. I have implemented creative facilitations in sessions with youth. I have made decisions fairly quickly, and I have dared to speak my mind. I have discovered more of my weaknesses and strengths. Overall, I have really enjoyed working on this project; it is a topic I feel passionate about, which gave me a lot of energy and ambition.

Personal Learnings

Of course, this graduation project came with learnings, moments of insecurity, and feelings of being lost. This section discusses some of the personal learnings I have experienced during the project.

Role models

I have encountered the topic of role models more than ever during this project (which is a psychological construct in its own). I have been reflecting on both my own role models and the ways that I could be a role model for others. My role models consist of many people around me. I copy behaviour from my family and friends, and from the people I am surrounded by. I get represented the possible by my peers, through social media, and by simply seeing people do things. I get inspired by my best friend, by the greatest artists, and by the barista at the café around the corner of my house. I think there might be a role model in everyone. It is only needed to be confident with who you are and what you want to contribute to the world.

A connector

During this project, I have discovered that I really enjoy connecting with people. I enjoy the deeper philosophical conversations, for example, about the meaning of the teacher in well-being and as a role model. I enjoy collaboration, even though I can also enjoy working on my own, I simply get more fulfilment from working together and connecting with people. I enjoy going on an adventure, to a new place, a new context, to discover what is on people's minds there. I think, therefore, this project really suited me as a person, as it required many adventurous trips to new schools and new dynamics.

Well-being, youth, health and psychology

I have discovered that this topic has given me a lot of energy, ambition and purpose. I feel like talking to youth and trying to connect their feelings with the schools' and teachers' values has been a really fun and meaningful challenge. I have discovered that I enjoy this type of research and reading about these psychological and social constructs. Even more so, I like talking about them with people who are interested in them as well. I hope to incorporate well-being, health, psychology and/or social/societal design in my future career.

Academic writing and structure

I have found the academic structure of this project quite challenging. It had been a while since I had done a strictly academic project; therefore, I needed some time to figure out how to structure the project and its insights. Overall, I am proud of how it turned out; however, I would have liked to have more iterations on the report's structure (for example, I might split the method section into two) and to have a bit more time to reflect on the project outcomes academically (e.g. phrase the tensions and deliberations some more).

Set milestones and deliver a report/poster for each milestone

An important lesson is that, as an individual designer, it is important to set realistic milestones: deliver a close-to-finished report (or poster, or another communication method) that is at least very clear on the findings. Really try to summarise and communicate what you have done before continuing into the next phase, and mention the initial reasoning.

I did not do this properly at the beginning, which made me feel a bit chaotic about the insights and reasoning behind the design. It also resulted in doing more work than necessary, since I used three different frameworks to summarise insight quotes in Miro, whereas just properly summarising and writing down the findings in a report in the end seemed to be enough to continue designing. I found it hard to realise that sense of 'good enough' while working, partly because I hadn't clearly written down what I had learned in the first phase.

As a professional designer, it is essential that I communicate my findings more clearly from the outset, both for my own clarity and, more importantly, so my clients can understand what I am doing and why I am taking a certain approach. Additionally, this encourages reflection on the findings, their relevance to the project, and the missing information needed to progress without becoming too broad.

Spend more time scoping the project (through literature)

I think I could have worked a bit more effectively if I had figured out the scope sooner. Especially since there is already so much being done for youth well-being in schools. I initially thought the assignment was a bit more focused on the teacher's role in youth well-being in general, and I spent a lot of time figuring out that role. However, the real distinction of my research, from all that there already is, is the role

model part. I could have dived into role model theories a bit sooner. This would have left more time at the end of the project for research through designing, research on my concept, which is something I really enjoy doing.

Furthermore, because youth well-being is so broad, I found it hard to maintain focus during desk research. I found so many interesting papers, reports, and webpages that diverted my focus from the scope. I wanted to create a very holistic overview of the problems that could be used by schools and teachers. This might have been because of my internship last semester at a strategic innovation agency focused on anthropological (and very holistic) research. In that internship, the deliverable was an insight report, not a design or academic report. Therefore, it was hard to keep the design scope in mind during desk research, and I think spending a bit more time at the beginning to really understand the current situation and research gaps from the perspective of Healthy Start could have helped me scope down more quickly.

Figuring out all the things you don't know can be daunting

During this project, where I started quite confident, I have ironically felt a lot of pressure to perform. Agreeing with the youth in the literature, I have mostly put this pressure on myself, as no one was pressuring me, but myself. I wanted to deliver an impactful result and aimed high. As is often the case with the last project of your studies, this one has meant a lot to me.

But diving into a world of so much research about topics you know nothing about, such as didactics, psychology, sociology and well-being, in only 100 days, was quite a challenge. Right in the middle of all those insights, I realised how little I actually know after these 8 years in and out of university. That I still make mistakes, even though I tried so hard from the start to plan everything well, and I can see the mistakes happening as they occur. That even though I know my strengths and talents, and I know that I am a capable designer, I can still feel disappointed in myself and my work. And that can feel daunting, especially when you are on the verge of starting your career as a professional.

I have needed my own role models, showing me ways to get out of this so-called dungeon, giving me motivation and confidence back. Putting things into perspective, providing a mindset, and building resilience. And now that I am finished, I realise this might have been the most valuable learning goal of them all. I would like to end with my own navigation cards, to foster well-being during an important and turbulent time of learning in life.



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ATTACHMENTS

ATT. 1: Systemic and other factors affecting youth well-being

Systemic view on well-being

Our system's contextual factors shape the context of youth well-being and perceived pressure from school holistically. In general, a systemic view is crucial for designing future-proof solutions, as Ida Engholm explains in her book 'Design for the New World' (Engholm, 2023). It is crucial that designers consider the broader scope before zooming in to ensure the right solution is found.

Success factors

Nationaal Kennisinstituut Onderwijs (2024) shows that there is no clear relationship between the number of exams students take and the exam pressure they experience. This fits with the idea that it is not so much the amount of testing as the value and consequences attached to it that shape experienced pressure. In line with this, Schut et al. (2018) demonstrate that a learner's sense of control over the assessment experience is a key factor in how they perceive assessment stakes.

Henk Hagoort, chair of the Dutch secondary school council, further argues in the podcast 'Jong Geleerd' that performance pressure is fed by the system (Van Der Burg et al., 2022). When parents and children are choosing between different secondary schools in the Netherlands, four indicators are used to compare schools. Of these four, three are about speed, so how fast students finish secondary school. This means, according to Hagoort, that less focus is put on the quality of education, and students are pressured to finish school more quickly.

Performance is seen as a form of success in our society, and the way our education system is set up emphasises this by using grades as a measure of success (Peeters et al., 2022). The Dutch government also uses exam grades as assessment and for inspection, which increases performance pressure (Peeters et al., 2022; Vermeulen et al., 2021). Lau (2015) recommends using both summative and formative examinations rather than relying solely on one or the other. Peeters et al. recommend shifting the focus from grades and 'levels' to personal and talent development. Dutch youth agree: they want schools to focus more on students' development rather than grading and performance (State of Youth NL et al., 2025).

CONFIRMATION FROM THE FIELD

'As a teacher, you still have to fight against certain restrictions imposed by the Ministry of Education. Because after all, at the end of their school journey, all the students have to make it through the national exams.'

– Alice, teacher

'In the school system, it can be quite challenging to find the flexibility to cater to individual students, because strictly speaking, you have to adhere to certain school rules.'

– Jan, teacher

Early selection of the education type

In the Netherlands, students receive advice on the type of education they should pursue, which could be VMBO, HAVO, or VWO. This happens in primary school, when students are 11 or 12 years old, which is very early in their development (Van Der Burg et al., 2022; Vermeulen et al., 2021). Almost 10% of students are in an educational setting that is more challenging for them than the recommended one, which is another source of stress (Vermeulen et al., 2021). Furthermore, Henk Hagoort highlights in the podcast 'Jong Geleerd' that it is becoming less easy for students to switch to a different type of education, because it often requires switching to a whole different school. A solution, as he mentions, could be to have more schools that offer a range of educational options in the first few years. Students can then choose a bit later which type of education suits them best or even choose a type of education for each subject (Van Der Burg et al., 2022).

'The reassurance that you can still change course later in life has also diminished. For parents, this translates into: if your child is not on the right track after primary school, they will have fewer opportunities later in life.'

- Henk Hagoort in de podcast 'Jong Geleerd' (Van Der Burg et al., 2022)

Other factors

Lifestyle

First, there is a correlation between lifestyle, physical and mental well-being in several aspects:

- Physical activity has a positive influence on mental health, lowering risks of depression, de-pressive symptoms and anxiety symptoms (Fox, 1999; Pearce et al., 2022; Singh et al., 2025).
- Research shows that sleep duration generally decreases during adolescence (Gariepy et al., 2020; Kocevska et al., 2020). At the same time, long sleep duration, good sleep quality and lower insomnia symptoms are bidirectionally related to better well-being, mental health and life satisfaction over time (Bacaro et al., 2023; Jung, 2025). Poor sleep is related to more de-pressive and anxiety symptoms (Marino et al., 2022; Narmandakh et al., 2019), and lower energy levels are associated with a higher average negative mood (Toenders et al., 2024).

- In addition, there is a relationship with diet quality and mental health amongst adolescents, where increased consumption of western processed foods is associated with higher risks of depression, depressive symptoms, and increased psychological distress, and in its turn, stress and depression can increase unhealthy eating (O'Neil et al., 2014; Tucker et al., 2025).
- These factors are also interrelated. For example, sleep influences adolescents' BMI (Rutters et al., 2010), and less sleep is associated with a higher intake of ultra-processed foods (An-dreeva et al., 2023). A healthy lifestyle, where all factors are bundled, could decrease symp-toms of depression, anxiety and psychological distress (Bourke et al., 2025).

Socioeconomic status and cultural background

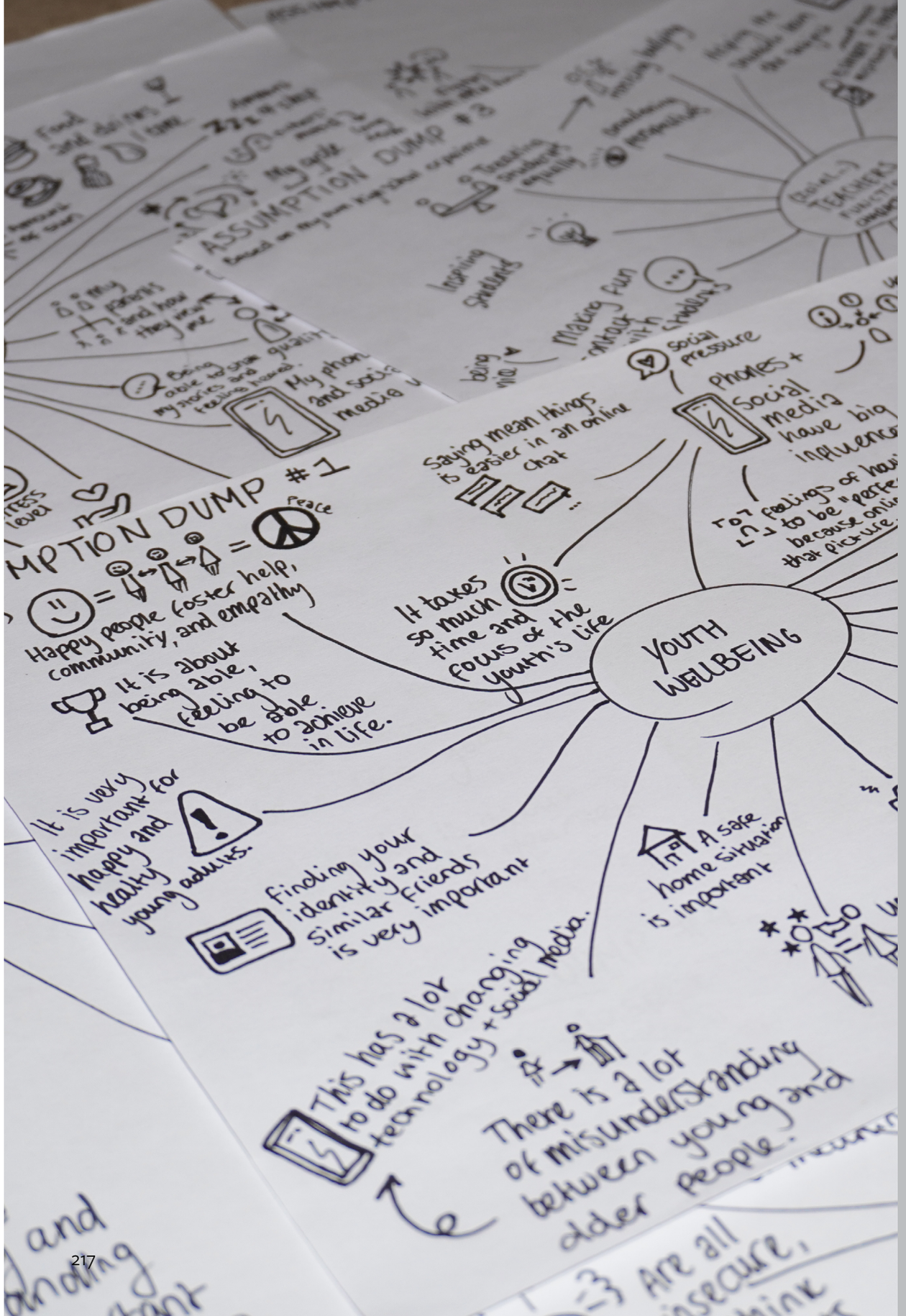
Secondly, the student's socioeconomic status and cultural background matter. For example, stu-dents with a migration background experience more discrimination, which influences their well-being, and cultural representation in mental healthcare providers is important for youth, but is underrepre-sented (Yassine et al., 2023).

Social Media

Teachers and parents often cite social media as a cause of increased pressure, although students themselves do not feel it plays a major role (Vermeulen et al., 2021). Research is underway on the influence of social media; for now, it is excluded from the scope.

'A friend of mine found Facebook depressing, because everyone seemed to have such a great life compared to his own. I recognise this in the behaviour of secondary school students, especially when they are in puberty.' – Gerwin, teacher

'Students' insecurity is influenced by what they see on TikTok, by seeing what others are looking like. This is, due to social media, not only happening at school nowadays, but day and night.' – Laurien, teacher



ATT. 2: Roles for effective teaching

Students' well-being is influenced by how effective learning, and effective teaching is considered as an important factor supporting youth well-being (Morinaj & Hascher, 2022; Peeters et al., 2022). Next, the teacher's roles in fostering effective learning are outlined.

Martie Sloter, an experienced Dutch educationalist, trainer and consultant, has written a book about the six roles of the teacher: 'De zes rollen van de leraar' (Slooter, 2018). These roles are defined through extensive scientific research and elaborate on the roles a teacher should take on if they want students to learn effectively, with behaviour indicators and developmental levels for each role. Below, the roles and connected behaviour are shown. As becomes clear, the aspects within these roles that are important specifically for this project, are scaled under the roles of the teacher defined in Chapter 2.5.

The six teacher roles are translated and described as follows:

1. The host (gastheer)
The host ensures that students feel welcome, safe, and seen in class. They show interest in the student, and provide a positive learning climate in the classroom.

2. The presenter (presentator)
The presenter clearly, structurally, and motivationally shows what will happen during the class. They formulate a learning goal, define forms of work, and maintain attention.

3. The didactician (didacticus)
The didactician focuses on transferring knowledge, skills and a working attitude. They explain knowledge, show examples, give practice time, ask questions, and provide feedback.

4. The pedagogue (pedagoog)
The pedagogue ensures a good learning and living climate in the class, with mutual respect, clear rules, and order. They build a relationship with the students, taking into account their behaviour and emotions, as well as their development outside of school.

5. The closer (afsluiter)
The closer closes the class in a conscious and purposeful way by summarising and reflecting on the class's learnings and looking ahead.

6. The coach (leercoach)
The coach aims to improve students' independent learning skills by helping them plan and set goals. They reflect with the students, and encourage self-regulation and independence.

Use in design

The roles have been used to identify the interaction qualities a teacher demonstrates during a class. It has been used to explore different ideas across roles and phases of the class.

Another framework, one that is implemented by the Dutch law, is that first and secondary school teachers need to be competent in seven areas, on which they are assessed on a regular basis. This was formulated by the 'Stichting Beroepskwaliteit Leraren' (SBL in short), with the goal of keeping the quality of education high (Messelink, 2022). The competences are as follows:

Interpersonal competence

Creates a safe, open and respectful atmosphere where students feel seen, heard and comfortable to learn.

Pedagogical competence

Guides students in their personal and social development, with clear boundaries and a warm, supportive approach.

Subject-matter & didactic competence

Knows the subject well and translates it into clear, structured and engaging lessons that fit students' level.

Organisational competence

Organises lessons, materials and time so that learning runs smoothly and students know what to expect.

Collaboration with colleagues

Shares ideas, asks for input and works with colleagues to improve teaching and the school as a whole.

Collaboration with the wider environment

Communicates openly with parents and external partners so students are supported together.

Reflection & professional development

Reflects regularly on teaching, learns from feedback and keeps developing as a professional.

> *'There must be a good balance between teaching your subject and being a pedagogue.'*
>
> – Pieter, student counsellor

ATT. 3: Teachers' interview guide

Interview guideline Teachers

Introductie

Goedendag, welkom!

Allereerst, wat super fijn dat u hiervoor tijd wilde vrijmaken. Mijn naam is Eefje Eikelenboom, ik ben een student aan de Technische Universiteit Delft, binnen de faculteit Industrieel Ontwerpen. Ik ben momenteel bezig met mijn master Design for Interaction, waarbij ik nu ben begonnen met mijn afstudeeronderzoek.

Dit doe ik vanuit het initiatief Healthy Start, opgezet als samenwerking tussen TU Delft, Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam en Erasmus Medisch Centrum. Dit onderzoek valt binnen het onderwerp jongerenwelzijn.

(Specifiek ben ik aan het onderzoeken wat de invloed en rol is van docenten op jongerenwelbevinden.) Ik ben daarvoor ontzettend benieuwd naar uw ervaringen in het onderwijs. Daarover gaat dit onderzoek.

Belangrijk om te weten is dat er geen goed of fout is. Ik stel de vragen puur om meer inzicht te krijgen in de wereld van het onderwijs op middelbare scholen. Alle antwoorden zijn daarom nuttig.

Het kan zijn dat ik een extra vraag stel, waarvan u misschien denkt dat het een herhaling is. Dit is dan ook omdat ik zeker wil weten dat ik uw gedachten goed volg en begrepen heb.

Ik zou u ook willen vragen of ik dit gesprek mag opnemen. De data en de opname worden puur voor het verwerken van het onderzoek gebruikt. De resultaten zullen worden geanonimiseerd.

Als laatste een check of u de consent form heeft getekend.

Super. Dan gaan we nu beginnen. Het onderzoek bestaat uit 5 onderdelen.

Deel 1: intro en algemeen

We starten met een algemene introductie. Ik stel ook wat persoonlijkere vragen, om een beeld van uw context als persoon te krijgen. Indien u liever geen antwoord op deze vragen geeft, geef dat vooral aan, dan gaan we door met de volgende vraag.

1. Kunt u uzelf voorstellen?
    a. Wat is uw leeftijd?
    b. Kunt u in één zin wat meer over uzelf vertellen, bijvoorbeeld woonsituatie, hobby's?
    c. Woont u in de buurt van de school?
        i. Woont u alleen, met partner en/of met kinderen?
    d. Heeft u zelf ook kinderen? Zo ja, hoeveel?
2. Kunt u wat meer over uw functie vertellen?
    a. Welke functie heeft u binnen het onderwijs?
        i. Welke vakken geeft u?
    b. Hoe lang werkt u al in het onderwijs?
3. Bent u ook mentor van een klas?

Deel 2: Welbevinden

2.1 Algemeen

4. Wat weet u over het welbevinden van leerlingen op uw school?
    a. Wat heeft het meeste invloed op het welbevinden van leerlingen, denkt u?
5. Wat zijn de grootste oorzaken van **stress** onder leerlingen, volgens u?
6. Wat zijn de grootste oorzaken van **prestatiedruk** onder leerlingen, volgens u?
    a. Heeft u het wel eens met leerlingen hierover?
    b. Zijn er specifiek dingen die u of de school doet om prestatiedruk voor leerlingen te verminderen? Waarom wel/niet?

2.2 Band met leerlingen

7. Hoe ziet u in het algemeen de band met uw leerlingen?
    a. Wanneer vormt zich dit, is dat vooral in het begin van een jaar of juist door het hele jaar heen?
    b. Heeft u wel eens moeite met een vormen van een band met leerlingen?
        i. Waar komt dat door?
        ii. Waar heeft u op dat moment behoefde aan?
    c. Uit onderzoek blijkt dat de relatie tussen leraar en leerling, vooral onder meisjes, is afgenomen. Heeft u dat idee ook in de praktijk?
8. Komt een leerling wel eens naar u toe met problemen of zorgen?
    a. Ja →
        i. Kunt u meer vertellen over de situatie? Een voorbeeld noemen?
        ii. Wat doet u in zon situatie?
        iii. Waar heeft u op dat moment behoefde aan?
        iv. Waar heeft de leerling op dat moment behoefde aan?
        v. Heeft u het idee dat u de leerling op zo'n moment voldoende kan ondersteunen?
        vi. Is er iets dat u mist in zo'n situatie?
    b. Nee →
        i. Hoe vind u dat?
        ii. Heeft u een idee waardoor dit zou kunnen komen?

2.3 School protocollen

9. Naar wie kunt u zelf gaan om over dit situaties of zorgen rondom leerlingen te praten?
    a. Zijn er daarvoor regelingen/protocollen op de school? Wat vind u daarvan?
    b. En op dat moment, waar heeft u dan behoefde aan?

2.4 Indien leraar ook mentor is

10. Had u een andere band met de klas dan wanneer u een vakdocent was?
    a. Hoe zou u deze band omschrijven?
    b. Wat maakt dat deze band anders was?
11. Zijn er dingen die wel voorkomen binnen het mentorschap, en niet binnen uw vaklessen?
    a. Welke dingen?
    b. Waarom komt dit volgens u alleen voor tijdens mentorles?

Deel 3: Rol van de docent

12. Hoe ziet u uw rol in het gezond houden van het mentale welzijn van uw leerlingen?
    a. Hoe is dat anders dan bijvoorbeeld een coach of psycholoog?
13. Wat vind u van die rol? Waarom vind u dat?
14. Heeft u het idee dat andere docenten een andere rol vervullen voor leerlingen?
    a. Waar ligt dat aan, volgens u?
15. Heeft u het idee dat u een rolmodel bent voor sommige leerlingen?
    a. Ja → Op wat voor manier? En waar merkt u dat aan?
    b. Nee → Waarom niet? Wie zijn rolmodellen voor uw leerlingen?
16. Heeft u wel eens contact met zorgprofessionals?
    a. Wat voor soort contact?
    b. Wat vind u van dit contact?
    c. Hoe kan dit contact beter worden benut, volgens u?
17. Vind u dat de school een verantwoordelijkheid draagt voor de mentale gezondheid van de leerlingen?

Deel 4: Welzijnsinitiatieven

18. Zijn er bepaalde initiatieven op uw school, om het welbevinden van leerlingen te bevorderen?
    a. Wie initieerde deze initiatieven?
    b. Denkt u dat deze initiatieven werken?
        i. Waarom wel/niet? Welke **elementen** wel/niet?
        ii. Welke elementen zijn essentieel om een initiatief te laten werken, volgens u?
        iii. Welke elementen werken niet, en waarom?
    c. Denkt u dat deze initiatieven ook op andere scholen zouden werken, indien die daar zouden worden toegepast? Waarom wel/niet?
19. Als u nu een verbetering zou kunnen doorvoeren op school om het mentale welzijn van leerlingen te verbeteren, wat zou dat dan zijn?
    a. Welke elementen weerhouden dit ervan om geïmplementeerd te worden?

Deel 5: Afsluiting

20. Wat is volgens u de belangrijkste take-away van dit interview?
21. Heeft u nog andere dingen die u zou willen delen over het welbevinden van jongeren op de middelbare school?
22. Zijn er dingen waar ik nog niet naar gevraagd heb, die wellicht wel interessant kunnen zijn voor het onderzoek?
23. Heeft u zelf nog vragen of opmerkingen?

Dan wil ik u nogmaals hartelijk bedanken voor uw antwoorden en tijd. Het is voor mij ontzettend waardevol om over uw ervaringen te horen.

Met behulp van uw antwoorden ga ik proberen in kaart te brengen wat de invloed en rol is van de leraar voor de mentale gezondheid van jongeren, en ik hoop daarna met nuttige ideeën en oplossingen te komen waar scholen, leraren en leerlingen wat aan hebben.

ATT. 4: Consent form & information letter teachers

Erasmus University Rotterdam

TU Delft

Informatiebrief
Mentaal welzijn van jongeren
Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam &
Technische Universiteit Delft

Hierbij ontvangt u informatie over het wetenschappelijk onderzoek Well – B – Young.

Wat onderzoeken we?
Wij onderzoeken hoe jongeren praten over mentaal welzijn en wat hun omgeving kan doen om het mentaal welzijn van jongeren te ondersteunen.

Hoe ziet het onderzoek eruit?
Om te onderzoeken hoe het met jongeren gaat, hebben we niet alleen kennis uit de wetenschap nodig maar willen we ook weten wat mensen om jongeren heen belangrijk vinden. Zo proberen we inzichten uit de praktijk te koppelen met de wetenschap.

Wat gaan we doen?
U bent gevraagd om mee te doen met een interview. In dit interview willen wij graag met u in gesprek over mentaal welzijn van jongeren en de rol van de school. Het gesprek wordt opgenomen ter verslaglegging. Deze informatie wordt anoniem opgeslagen en is niet naar u herleidbaar.

Welke gegevens hebben we nodig?
Voor het uitvoeren van ons onderzoek vragen we uw toestemming om de volgende gegevens te verzamelen:
1. Uw naam, functie en e-mailadres. Deze gegevens verzamelen we om met u te communiceren en om te kijken wat voor deelnemers er mee wilden doen met onze sessies.
2. Een geluidsopname van het gesprek.

Wie kunnen uw gegevens inzien?
Om uw privacy te waarborgen, worden uw gegevens anoniem gemaakt. Uw naam en andere gegevens waardoor anderen u direct kunnen identificeren worden apart bewaard van de rest van uw informatie. Alleen de hoofdonderzoeker (Yara Toenders) van dit onderzoek heeft toegang tot uw direct identificeerbare informatie. Andere bij dit onderzoek betrokken partijen (zoals andere onderzoekers van dit onderzoek) zullen alleen uw anonieme gegevens kunnen zien. Ook in rapporten en publicaties zal uw informatie helemaal anoniem zijn.
In het geval van vragen over de verwerking van persoonsgegevens kunt u contact opnemen met onze privacy officer (privacy@eur.nl).

Hoe lang worden mijn gegevens bewaard?
Op de Erasmus School of Social and Behavioral Sciences te Rotterdam worden uw gegevens gedurende de wettelijk voorgeschreven termijn 10 jaar bewaard.
Na het uitvoeren van dit onderzoek kunnen uw gegevens mogelijk nog van belang zijn voor het uitvoeren van een ander onderzoek. Daarvoor is het langer bewaren van uw gegevens noodzakelijk. We vragen u om toestemming voor het langer bewaren van uw gegevens voor mogelijk gebruik hiervan in ander, toekomstig onderzoek.

Intrekken toestemming
Uw medewerking aan dit onderzoek is helemaal vrijwillig. U kunt de toestemming die u hebt gegeven altijd weer intrekken. De verzamelde gegevens over u zullen dan nog wel worden gebruikt in het onderzoek. Wanneer u wilt dat al uw gegevens worden verwijderd, kunt u dit aan ons aangeven.

U kunt ook contact opnemen met de Functionaris voor de Gegevensbescherming van de Erasmus University Rotterdam [redacted] Meer informatie over uw rechten bij de verwerking van uw persoonsgegevens kunt u vinden op de website van de Autoriteit Persoonsgegevens: https://autoriteitpersoonsgegevens.nl/nl/.

Ethische toestemming
Dit onderzoek is getoetst en goedgekeurd door de ethische commissie van de afdeling DPECS (Psychologie en Pedagogische Wetenschappen) van de Erasmus School of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

Mocht u naar aanleiding van deze informatie nog vragen hebben met betrekking tot dit onderzoek dan kunt u daarmee terecht bij:

Het onderzoeksteam;
Dr. Yara Toenders
Eefje Eikelenboom BSc

Erasmus School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Erasmus University Rotterdam,
Thomas Morelaan, 3062 PA Rotterda[redacted]

Toestemmingsverklaring

Beste deelnemer,

Wat leuk dat je mee wil doen met het project. We willen aan u vragen om eerst **de informatiebrief te lezen**. Hier vindt u ook alle informatie over hoe je gegevens verzameld en opgeslagen worden, hoe we uw privacy beschermen en wat uw rechten zijn. Voor vragen kan u mij mailen via e.[redacted]

- Ik heb de informatiebrief gelezen
- Ik heb de mogelijkheid gekregen om via mail vragen te stellen.
- Ik weet dat meedoen vrijwillig is en dat ik elk moment kan stoppen.
- Ik wil meedoen aan het onderzoek.

Bij het ondertekenen van dit formulier ga ik akkoord met bovenstaande informatie, zoals vermeld in deze informatiebrief.

Hieronder hebben we nog twee extra vragen. Goed om te weten: u kunt met het project meedoen ook al gaat u niet akkoord met de vragen hieronder.

- Ik ga akkoord dat mijn onderzoeksgegevens (zonder naam en e-mailadres) gedeeld worden met onderzoekers buiten het project.

  Ja / Nee

Vermeld hieronder uw gegevens:
Voornaam:
Achternaam:
E-mailadres:

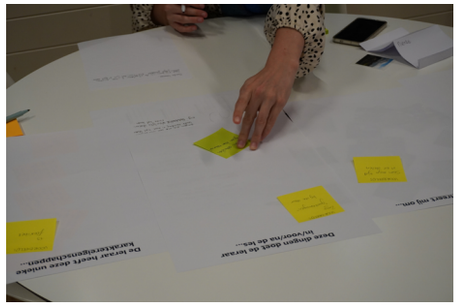
Handtekening:

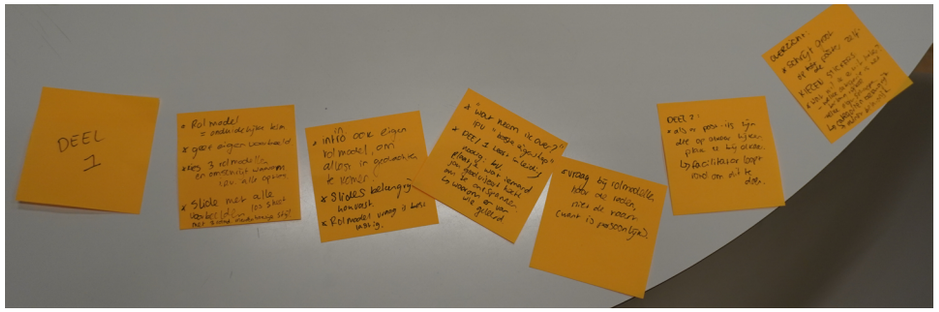
ATT. 5: Outcomes of pilot test

Session 1:

- Rolmodel = an unclear term. introduction of role modelling was added in the introduction slides.
- Own example of a role model was added to slides
- choose 3 role models and describe - in stead of 12 different role models and choose between those.
- Add a slide with all sorts of examples of role models, in stead of adding it to the template sheet.
- Slides are important guidances.
- Role model question was a bit hard to understand.
- Changes in wording.
- Part 1 needed more introduction. That's why I added choosing an image of something you've learned from someone else.
- Ask for the reason, not the name of the role model, since that can be personal. Highlight this.
- Part 2: Put together the sticky notes that resemble.
- Putting the stickers up takes not so much time, 2 min.
- Ranking the sheets will make it a good round up, and make it visible what students find most and least important.



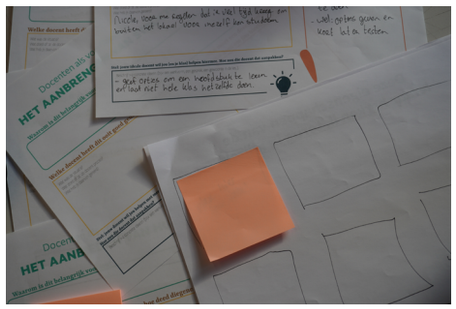




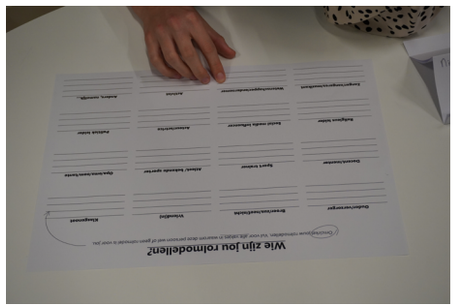
Session 3:

- Sub-questions need to be more clear.
- Every other statement needs to be swapped.









ATT. 6: Procedure student sessions

Procedure workshop 1

1. Introduction (15 min)
In the introduction, the facilitator was introduced, along with the study's background, aim, and ethics information. The students were introduced to the topic with some statements. The agenda was mentioned.

2. Icebreaker: name tag & something you do to relax (5 min)
Students made a name tag and chose one or two images from a set of pre-made images related to well-being and ways to deal with stress. They could choose images that matched how they relax.

3. Discussion (5 min)
We discussed the images they picked out.

4. Introduction to role models (3 min)
Then, students chose another image that resembled something they had learned from someone else, to introduce them to the topic of role modelling.

5. Discussion (5 min)
The images were discussed again, and the reasoning was asked.

6. Part I: Role models (10 min)
Students all received a template to fill in up to 3 role models in their lives. They were asked why they chose this person and what they learned from and/or appreciated in their role models.

7. Discussion: Teachers as role models (7 min)
Students were asked whom they chose as a role model and why, and whether they chose their teacher.

8. *Break (10 min)*

9. Part II: Letter to a teacher
In the second part of the workshop, students were asked to write a letter to a teacher they really appreciated in the past (inspired by p. 135 of the book 'The Art of Co-Design' by Kerr et al., 2024). They were asked to write down why this teacher helped them through their school years.

10. Part III: Teacher qualities and behaviour
Then, students were asked to write down the qualities of the teacher they identified while writing the letter on sticky notes. Then they were asked to place the sticky notes on the corresponding sheets of paper under the following themes: personal characteristics, things the teacher does in/before/after class, things the teacher has inspired students in, and qualities the teacher possesses that the student recognises in themselves.

11. Choosing the most important qualities
Each student got a red and green sticker for each category and placed them on the qualities or characteristics they found most and least important.

12. Ranking and group discussion
Then, they ranked the four categories from most to least important.

13. Discussing the teacher's qualities
Then, the facilitator discussed the rankings and qualities that students had noted for each group.

14. Conclusion and final discussion
Finally, the overall teacher qualities were linked back to the role model qualities discussed earlier in the workshop. A discussion was held to explore why certain differences or overlaps occurred.

15. Wrap up & goodbye
The session was rounded off with gratitude and the next steps in the research.

Procedure workshop 2

Some sections were similar to those in the other workshop; they are not elaborated on again.

1. Introduction (15 min)

2. Icebreaker: name tag & something you do to relax (5 min)

3. Discussion (5 min)

4. Part I: Role models (10 min)

5. Discussion: Teachers as role models (5 min)

6. Part II: Collaging role models (10 min)
Students were asked to identify concrete characteristics of their role models and create a collage featuring those characteristics (inspired by p. 67 of the book 'The Art of Co-Design' by Kerr et al., 2024). Magazines were used to provide images and words to associate with.

7. Showing results (5 min)
Groups presented their posters.

8. Conclusion, wrap up & goodbye (5 min)

Procedure workshop 3

In session 3, the insights from the first workshop were taken and elaborated upon.

1. Introduction (10 min)
A recap of last time was given, and a few additional statements were discussed. The agenda and ethics were discussed.

2. Teacher as example (10 min)
Different templates were handed out to students, each with a teacher quality from the previous workshop. They could fill in for each quality why it is important to them, how teachers have demonstrated this quality in the past, and what a teacher should or should not do to exemplify it.

3. Coming up with ideas (10 min)
In pairs, students now brainstormed ideas of things that could help a teacher be an example of each of the qualities.

4. Discussion (15 min)
Each group chose one or two ideas they found most important, was asked to explain them and discuss why they were important to them.

5. Wrap up & goodbye (5 min)

ATT. 7: Excel student sessions

From	To	Duration (min)	Activity	Method	Tool / Boundary object	Purpose	Preparation	Guidelines for the facilitation
11:30	12:00	30	Preparation	Putting tables in groups of 5 Preparing playlist to put on music during the session. Putting up big "overview" poster		Set the environment	Put out snacks, set up the room	
12:00	12:15	15	Introduction 1) Who am I (1 min) 2) My study at TU Delft, what is Industrial Design? How is Delft? (3 min) 3) How did I get here? How did I choose Industrial Design? Who were role models in that for me? (3 min) 4) Interactive part about mental health (2 min) 5) About the project, the purpose of the workshop (2 min) 6) Creating safe space, rules for communication (3 min) 7) The agenda, what are we going to do today (1 min)	Interactive part, ask to raise hands: 1)When I hear metal well-being I think about: - fist = taking care of myself, relaxing - flat hand = problems and stress 2) I clear my head through: - fist = psysical activities (sports, yoga, etc) - flat hand = mental activities (writing, talking, mindfullness, creativity, etc) 3) After a long day at school, I relax by: - fist = hanging out with others - flat hand = quite, alone time	Supported by PowerPoint	Get participant to be aware of the purpose of the workshop, building trust and making them feel at ease. Explain where in the process I am, and what I want to get out of the workshop. Set the scene and shared understanding of the problem and topic.	Make a powerpoint, to support the facilitator and the students	Explaining agenda with timeslots - Explaining outcomes we expect - Build trust and empowerment; "you are the experts, there is no wrong answers, etc" - Explain that the research is useful and will be read by experts over The Netherlands, so it really is a good input that is valuable (motivating participation). **- Keep interacting after every activity** **- Did everyone understand? Is it clear? Etc**
12:15	12:20	5	Icebreaker: name tag & something you do to relax	Each student gets a small piece of paper that they should write their names on. They should then pick an image from the table, resembeling something that makes them relax, and put that next to their name tag.	Paper and pens, images of things you do to relax.	Get participants familiar with the topic of stress/relaxation, make them talk and think about themselves in the context of well-being while facilitator can get to know names	Folded (thicker) white paper Laminated images	Engage with participants, get them to talk to each other - Build trust and create a fun environment
12:20	12:25	5	Discussion	We shortly discuss some of the images the students have picked. They explain why they have picked these images.	Mic	Interaction and explanation of thoughts.		
12:25	12:28	3	Introduction to role models	Now, students pick a new card from something that helps them relax, but now something they have learned, heared, or picked up **from someone else**.	images of things you do to relax.	Get participants into thinking about who learned them something well-being related, to prepare them for the next excersise.		Explain it can be from social media, from a family member or friend, something you have seen in the news or in a magazine, etc.
12:28	12:33	5	Discussion	We shortly discuss some of the images the students have picked. They explain why they have picked these images.	Mic	Interaction and explanation of thoughts.		
12:33	12:43	10	**Part 1: Role models**	**Who do you see as a role model and why?** Every individual gets a poster to fill out, with 3 possible role models. Facilitator will walk around with a small microphone and go around the table to talk shortly to students to let them explain why they chose certain role models. Facilitator writes down things students explained to find important in their role models.	Poster A3 'your role models' Influencer mic *(this is seen to work very well and give excitement to answer, in previous research with youth)*	Defining the students view on role models. Gathering caracteristics that are of importance for students.	A3 Posters, for all students Pens	Walk around and ask for thoughts. Don't ask the names, but ask the reason why they choose this person.
12:43	12:50	7	Discussion: Teachers as role models?	Facilitator shortly states what they have heard. Then asks to raise hands for those **who chose the teacher as a role model** in the previous excersise, and then who didn't. Ask students to explain (in the mic) why they did or did not choose the teacher.	Sheet A1 'overview' mic	Interaction, showing conlusion from the previous excercise. Figuring out why students did or did not choose the teacher as a role model, what makes the role model the role model? What misses for some to have a teacher as the role model?	Big sheet to draw/stick conslusions on.	If there is time we discuss: did anyone ever copy behaviour of a teacher in the past? Both positive/negative? Which behaviour?
12:50	*13:00*	*10*	*Break*			*Energize & rest*	*Snacks and drinks*	
13:00	13:10	10	**Part 2: Letter to a teacher**	Students choose a teacher they really like (could be a teacher they had in the past). Each individual chooses 1 teacher. They don't have to write down who this teacher is, as long as they take this teacher in mind. Letter writing (page 135 in 'The Art of Co-Design'); Each individual takes a piece of paper and writes a letter to this chosen teacher, explaining why they appreciate them, and what they did to help them through their years in middle school. Students don't add names (neither their own/their teachers').	Letter paper Prompt shown on the powerpoint	We want to know the qualities that students appreciate in teachers, to figure out what teachers might be a role model in (around mental health), and what these teachers did to help students through middle school (stimulating their well-being).	Writing paper Pens	Explain that the letter will not be send to the teacher, it is just for the research, and as reflection for the students themselves (they take a moment to look back on their years in middle school). Also explain that the letter is anonym, so no name is needed. Challenge students to think deeply, about concrete **characteristics**, **behaviour** and **habits** of this teacher that they appreciated.
13:10	13:20	10	**Part 3: Teacher qualities and behaviour**	Think about the letter that has been written. In groups, we now all take some post-its and write down on 4 sheets of paper, what does the teacher you like have concretely: -Personal characteristics -Behaviour in/before/after class -Things this teacher inspired students in -Things the teacher has, that the students can relate to (what similarities are there?) If there are post-its that say similar things, students and facilitator place them close together (clustered)	4x A3 sheets about teacher qualities	Choosing most important concrete aspects together in groups. Finding out if similarity is important and what qualities and behaviour students like most.	4x A3 sheets about teacher qualities	Record discussion Guiding questions: What can a teacher do to support you? Which things might you mirror or learn from teachers that could help you in your well-being or controlling the pressure you feel in school? Did they motivate you in some way? Also think about younger people in school, how would a future teacher help them, or your younger self?
13:20	13:22	2	Choosing the most important qualities	Next, students all get 4 green and 4 red stickers. They choose in each category what they find most important (green), and least important (red), and stick their stickers on the sticky notes.	Red and green stickers	Finding the most and least important qualities.	Red and green stickers	
13:22	13:27	5	Ranking and group discussion	Now students count which post-its have the most green dots. They place this on top of the sheet. Then, they in the groups rank the four catagories from most (left) to least (right) important.	4x A3 sheets about teacher qualities	Ranking, summarizing, and letting students share their thoughts in the groups		Record discussion Facilitator starts writing insights already on the big sheet.
13:27	13:35	8	Discussing the teacher qualities	The facilitator asks students to explain why they have chosen this qualities and rankings. We discuss this together, also comparing in between groups.		Interaction and explanation of thoughts.		
13:35	13:45	10	Conclusion and final discussion	Facilitator now relates back to the role model qualities from the first excersise. Is it similar to the teacher qualities defined now? What are differences, why? How could this be changed? We discuss this in the group. For next session, think about: How could we help more teachers become these role models for mental health?	Sheet A1 'overview'	Conclusion and full overview of what we did in the session and what came out. Sparking interest in the next session.		How could we help teachers become role models -> think about that before next session in 2 weeks.
13:45	13:50	5	Wrap up & goodbye	Ending with an expression of gratitude and showing next steps in the research. Answering remaining questions.	Supported by powerpoint	Wrap up the workshop in a nice way, say thank you and explain why it has benefitted our project		Express gratitude and sum up the activities - Briefly explain the next part of our process, so they feel that they have helped shape the project outcome - Explain the next sessions -Ask if they have questions

From	To	Duration (min)	Activity	Method	Tool / Boundary object	Purpose	Preparation	Guidelines for the facilitation
11:30	12:00	30	Preparation	Putting tables in groups of 5 Preparing playlist to put on music during the session. Putting up big "overview" poster		Set the environment	Put out snacks, set up the room	
10:55	11:10	15	Introduction 1) Who are we (1 min) 2) How did we get here? How did we choose our job/study? Who were role models in that for us? (3 min) 4) Interactive part about mental health & role models (2 min) 5) About the project, the purpose of the workshop (2 min) 6) Creating safe space, rules for communication (3 min) 7) The agenda, what are we going to do today (1 min) 8) consent forms (3 min)	Interactive part, ask to raise hands: 1) I clear my head through: - fist = psysical activities (sports, yoga, etc) - flat hand = mental activities (writing, talking, mindfullness, creativity, etc) 2) After a long day at school, I relax by: - fist = hanging out with others - flat hand = quite, alone time 3) When I hear the term 'role model' I think about: - fist = someone who is an example in behaviour - Flat hand = someone who inspires me	Supported by PowerPoint	Get participant to be aware of the purpose of the workshop, building trust and making them feel at ease. Explain where in the process we are, and what we want to get out of the workshop. Set the scene and shared understanding of the problem and topic.	Make a powerpoint, to support the facilitator and the students (Eefje)	Explaining agenda with timeslots - Explaining outcomes we expect - Build trust and empowerment; "you are the experts, there is no wrong answers, etc" - Explain that the research is useful and will be read by experts over The Netherlands, so it really is a good input that is valuable (motivating participation). **- Keep interacting after every activity** **- Did everyone understand? Is it clear? Etc**
11:10	11:15	5	Icebreaker: name tag & something you do to relax	Students pick a card from something that helps them relax, but it has to be something they have learned, heared, or picked up **from someone else**.	Paper and pens, images of things you do to relax.	Get participants familiar with the topic of stress/relaxation, make them talk and think about themselves in the context of well-being. Get them into thinking about who learned them something well-being related, to prepare them for the next excersise.	Laminated images (eefje)	Explain it can be from social media, from a family member or friend, something you have seen in the news or in a magazine, etc.
11:15	11:20	5	Discussion	We shortly discuss some of the images the students have picked. They explain why they have picked these images.	Mic	Interaction and explanation of thoughts.		
11:20	11:30	10	**Part 1: Role models**	**Who do you see as a role model and why?** Every individual gets a poster to fill out, with 3 possible role models. Facilitator will walk around with a small microphone and go around the table to talk shortly to students to let them explain why they chose certain role models..	Poster A3 'your role models' Influencer mic *(this is seen to work very well and give excitement to answer, in previous research with youth)*	Defining the students view on role models. Gathering caracteristics that are of importance for students.	A3 Posters, for all students (Eefje) Pens (Sophie & Eefje)	Walk around and ask for thoughts. Don't ask the names, but ask the reason why they choose this person.
11:30	11:35	5	Discussion	Facilitator shortly states what they have heard. Then asks to raise hands for those **who chose the teacher as a role model** in the previous excersise, and then who didn't. Ask students to explain (in the mic) why they did or did not choose the teacher.	Mic	Interaction, showing conlusion from the previous excercise. Figuring out why students did or did not choose the teacher as a role model, what makes the role model the role model? What misses for some to have a teacher as the role model?		If there is time we discuss: did anyone ever copy behaviour of a teacher in the past? Both positive/negative? Which behaviour?
11:35	11:45	10	**Part 2: Collage about role models**	Next, students think about concrete characteristics of their role models, and how their "ideal" role model looks like. In groups, they make a collage of all the things they think their role model should have, using magazines and post-its. Facilitators walk around and ask students the reasons why they have chosen certain images/words.	Sheet A1 Magazines Post-its mic	Summarizing findings about role models, sparking conversations in groups	Magazines (Sophie) Coloured pens (Sophie) A1 sheet (Eefje) Post-its (Eefje) Mic (Eefje)	
11:45	11:50	5	Showing Results	The groups now shortly present their posters in 1 minute (or facilitator shows the summary of the posters).		Wrapping up, concluding		
11:50	11:55	5	Conclusion, wrap up & goodbye	Ending with an expression of gratitude and showing next steps in the research. Answering remaining questions.	Supported by powerpoint	Wrap up the workshop in a nice way, say thank you and explain why it has benefitted our project		Express gratitude and sum up the activities - Briefly explain the next part of our process, so they feel that they have helped shape the project outcome - Explain the next sessions -Ask if they have questions

ATT. 8: Presentation slides session 1





Presentation slides session 2





Presentation slides session 3

TU Delft x Healthy Start

Invloed van rolmodellen op mentale gezondheid

Workshop door Eefje Eikelenboom

Terugblik op vorige keer



Agenda

12:00 Vorige keer en introductie
12:10 1. Docent als voorbeeld in...
12:25 2. Ideeën bedenken
12:35 3. Bespreken
12:50 Einde

Alles is goed!

We tonen begrip

- Het is een gevoelig onderwerp, dus extra belangrijk om iedereen in zijn/haar waarde te laten.
- Alles is goed, er zijn geen foute antwoorden.
- Je mag altijd stoppen, je hoeft niets te vertellen als je je niet prettig daarbij voelt

Wat is de rol van de leraar?

Ik vind het belangrijker dat een leraar...

Mij de stof goed uitlegt

Mij kan ondersteunen met zaken buiten school

Wat is de rol van de leraar?

Ik vind het belangrijker dat een leraar...

Flexibel begeleiding geeft, die regels aanpast als dat beter aansluit bij de leerlingen en de situatie.

De regels bewaakt en orde houd, zodat iedereen rustig kan werken.

Wat is de rol van de leraar?

Ik vind het belangrijker dat een leraar...

Mij **klaarstoomt voor het examen:** focussen op CE, oefentoetsen en exameneisen.

Mij **voorbereidt op de maatschappij:** kritisch leren denken, discussiëren en een eigen mening vormen, ook als dat niet direct voor het examen nodig is.

Wat is de rol van de leraar?

Ik vind het belangrijker dat een leraar...

Rekening houdt met verschillen tussen leerlingen: de aanpak, ondersteuning en verwachtingen aanpast aan wat een leerling nodig heeft.

Iedere leerling **gelijk behandelt:** dezelfde regels, dezelfde verwachtingen en dezelfde aanpak voor iedereen hanteert.

Wat is de rol van de leraar?

Ik vind het belangrijker dat een leraar...

Zo **neutraal en professioneel** mogelijk blijft, en weinig van het eigen leven en de eigen mening deelt

Zichtbaar is als persoon, en af en toe eigen ervaringen of meningen deelt in de les.

1. Rollen leraar



Het doel van deze sessie is om met jullie input uiteindelijk de **docenten een richtlijn/houvast** te kunnen geven, hoe zij een rolmodel zouden kunnen zijn in de verschillende voorbeeld "rollen".

2. Brainstorm



In tweetallen, brainstorm nu concrete ideeën die een docent zou kunnen helpen of gebruiken per onderdeel.

Schrijf of teken de ideeën op post-its, en plak ze op het sjabloon.

Alles is goed!!

En nu?



TU Delft x Healthy Start

Dank jullie wel!

3. Bespreken



Kies één of twee ideeën die jij het leukst vind. Een van jullie tweetal legt het idee / de ideeën uit aan de klas.

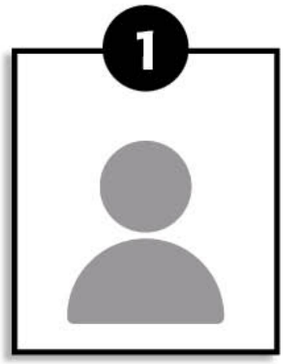
Vergoeding

ATT. 9: Used Templates for Student session

Wie zijn mijn rolmodellen?

Van wie neem je gedrag of gedachten over? Naar wie kijk je op? Wie vind je inspirerend? Wie laat je zien wat er mogelijk is? Wie bewonder je?

1



Naam:

Waarom is dit een rolmodel voor mij?

Wat heb ik van deze persoon geleerd en/of overgenomen?

2



Naam:

Waarom is dit een rolmodel voor mij?

Wat heb ik van deze persoon geleerd en/of overgenomen?

3



Naam:

Waarom is dit een rolmodel voor mij?

Wat heb ik van deze persoon geleerd en/of overgenomen?

Docenten als voorbeeld in **HET UITSTRALEN VAN PASSIE**

Waarom is dit belangrijk voor jou?

Welke docent heeft ooit goed diens passie laten zien en hoe deed diegene dat?
Wat was de situatie? Wat deed of zei de docent precies?
Wat heb je daarvan geleerd?

Wat moet een docent wel of juist niet doen om jou te helpen om ook jou passie te vinden?

Docenten als voorbeeld in **HET OMGAAN MET STRESS**

Waarom is dit belangrijk voor jou?

Welke docent heeft ooit goed laten zien op welke manieren je met stress kunt omgaan, en hoe deed diegene dat?
Wat was de situatie? Wat deed of zei de docent precies?
Wat heb je daarvan geleerd?

Wat moet een docent wel of juist niet doen om jou te helpen om met stress om te gaan?

Docenten als voorbeeld in **HET OMGAAN MET STRESS**

Stel: jouw docent wil laten zien hoe je beter met stress kunt omgaan. Hoe zou die docent dat aanpakken?

Bedenk concrete ideeën (bijv. een werkvorm, een gesprek, een gewoonte in de les...) en schrijf of teken ze op post-its.

Plak je post-it hier

ATT. 10: Consent form & information letter students

Informatiebrief
Mentaal welzijn van jongeren
Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam
& Technische Universiteit Delft

Hierbij ontvang je verdere informatie over een wetenschappelijk onderzoek waarvoor jouw medewerking is gevraagd.

Wat onderzoeken we?
In deze brief kun je lezen waar dit onderzoek over gaat en wat je allemaal gaat doen als je besluit om mee te doen. Je kunt ook onze video's met informatie over meedoen aan onderzoek bekijken (ga naar www.youngxperts.nl/informatie-over-onderzoek/).
Wij onderzoeken hoe jongeren praten over mentaal welzijn en wat hun omgeving zoals de school en de leraar kan doen om het mentaal welzijn van jongeren te ondersteunen. Specifiek kijken we in dit onderzoek naar de invloed van de leraar op jou welbevinden. Het onderzoek gaat ook over rolmodellen die jou ondersteunen in jou welzijn.

Hoe ziet het onderzoek eruit?
Om te onderzoeken hoe het met jongeren gaat en wat de invloed van school en de leraar is hierop, hebben we niet alleen kennis uit de wetenschap nodig maar willen we ook weten wat jongeren zelf belangrijk vinden. Door ons te laten weten wat jij belangrijk vindt, lever je een belangrijke bijdrage aan ons onderzoek én word je zelf ook een onderzoeker. Uiteindelijk hopen we zo een bijdrage te leveren aan minder stress en een positieve sfeer op school.

Wat gaan we doen?
Je bent gevraagd om mee te doen met een workshop waarin wij graag met jou in gesprek gaan over mentaal welzijn en rolmodellen. Er wordt een verslag gemaakt van het gesprek, maar de notities, analyse en geluidsopnames zijn niet naar jou herleidbaar in de uiteindelijke publicaties van het onderzoek.

Gevoelig onderwerp
In dit onderzoek vragen we je onder meer naar wat voor jou invloed heeft op stress en prestatiedruk. Dit kan ervoor zorgen dat je je bewust wordt van negatieve gevoelens en gedachten. Als je je al lange tijd (meer dan twee weken) somber voelt en nergens zin in hebt, wordt het aangeraden om hierover contact op te nemen met je huisarts of met de Alles Oké Supportlijn (https://www.allesoke.nl/).
Weet daarnaast dat je absoluut niets hoeft de delen als je je hier niet prettig bij voelt, en dat je ook altijd mag stoppen met meedoen, zonder hiervoor een reden aan ons of aan de leraar te hoeven geven.

Zijn er voordelen?
Met dit onderzoek help je de toekomstige generatie scholieren, maar daarnaast ontvang je ook 10 euro als compensatie als je meedoet aan het onderzoek.

Welke gegevens hebben we nodig?
Voor het uitvoeren van ons onderzoek vragen we jouw toestemming om de volgende gegevens te verzamelen:
1. Je leeftijd, klas en opleidingsniveau.
Deze gegevens verzamelen we om de antwoorden in een context te kunnen plaatsen.
2. Een geluidsopname van het gesprek tijdens het jongerenpanel.
Dit verzamelen we om de sessie na afloop terug te kunnen luisteren en jullie ideeën te verwerken in ons onderzoek.
3. Foto's van de sessie (anoniem, dus onherkenbaar).
Dit gebruiken we om te kunnen laten zien hoe we dit onderzoek hebben uitgevoerd aan partijen die er niet bij waren. Je zal niet herkenbaar in beeld komen, de foto's worden bewerkt waardoor gezichten niet herkenbaar zullen zijn.

Wie kunnen je gegevens inzien?
Om je privacy te waarborgen, worden je gegevens anoniem gemaakt. Je naam en andere gegevens waardoor anderen jou direct kunnen identificeren worden apart bewaard van de rest van jouw informatie. Alleen de

hoofdonderzoekers [redacted] n dit onderzoek hebben toegang tot jouw direct identificeerbare informatie. Andere bij dit onderzoek betrokken partijen (zoals andere onderzoekers van dit onderzoek) zullen alleen jouw anonieme gegevens kunnen zien. Ook in rapporten en publicaties zal jouw informatie helemaal anoniem zijn.
In het geval van vragen over de verwerking van persoonsgegevens kun je contact opnemen met onze privacy officer [redacted]

Hoe lang worden mijn gegevens bewaard?
Op de Erasmus School of Social and Behavioral Sciences te Rotterdam worden je gegevens gedurende de wettelijk voorgeschreven termijn bewaard, namelijk 10 jaar.

Bewaring en gebruik van gegevens voor ander onderzoek
Na het uitvoeren van dit onderzoek kunnen jouw gegevens mogelijk nog van belang zijn voor het uitvoeren van een ander onderzoek. Daarvoor is het langer bewaren van jouw gegevens noodzakelijk. We vragen je om toestemming voor het langer bewaren van jouw gegevens voor mogelijk gebruik hiervan in ander, toekomstig onderzoek op het gebied van sociaal gedrag in bijzondere situaties.

Intrekken toestemming
Je kunt de toestemming die je hebt gegeven altijd weer intrekken. De verzamelde gegevens over jou zullen dan nog wel worden gebruikt in het onderzoek. Wanneer je wil dat al je gegevens worden verwijderd, kun je dit aan ons aangeven.

Meer informatie over je rechten bij verwerking van gegevens
Voor meer informatie over de naleving van je rechten bij de verwerking van je persoonsgegevens kan je contact opnemen met degene die verantwoordelijk is voor de verwerking van je persoonsgegevens. Binnen dit onderzoeksteam zal Yara Toenders verantwoordelijk zijn voor de naleving van de regels en het verwerken van persoonsgegevens.

Je kunt ook contact opnemen met de Functionaris voor de Gegevensbescherming van de Erasmus University Rotterdam, Marlon Domingus. E-mail: fg@eur.nl. Meer informatie over je rechten bij de verwerking van je persoonsgegevens kun je vinden op de website van de Autoriteit Persoonsgegevens: https://autoriteitpersoonsgegevens.nl/nl/.

Ethische toestemming
Dit onderzoek is getoetst en goedgekeurd door de ethische commissie van de afdeling DPECS (Psychologie en Pedagogische Wetenschappen) van de Erasmus School of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

Vrijwillige deelname
Je medewerking aan dit onderzoek is helemaal vrijwillig. Als je toestemming geeft om aan dit onderzoek mee te doen, mag je toch altijd deze toestemming intrekken en stoppen met het onderzoek. Het wel of niet meedoen zal op geen enkele manier nadelige gevolgen voor je hebben.

Mocht je naar aanleiding van deze informatie nog vragen hebben met betrekking tot dit onderzoek dan kan je daarmee terecht bij:

Het onderzoeksteam;
Dr. Yara Toenders
Eefje Eikelenboom, BSc

Erasmus School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Thomas Morelaan, 3062 PA Rotterdam. E[redacted]

Toestemmingsverklaring

Beste deelnemer,

Wat leuk dat je mee wil doen met het project. We willen aan je vragen om eerst de informatiebrief te lezen. Voor meer informatie kun je onze **vlogs** te bekijken waarin uitgelegd wordt wat meedoen aan onderzoek doen inhoudt. Hier vind je ook alle informatie over hoe je gegevens verzameld en opgeslagen worden, hoe we jouw privacy beschermen en wat jouw rechten zijn. Voor vragen kan je ons mailen via e[redacted]

- ☐ Ik heb de informatiebrief gelezen en/of het informatiefilmpje gezien met daarin uitgebreide informatie over het project.
- ☐ Ik heb de mogelijkheid gekregen om via mail vragen te stellen.
- ☐ Ik weet dat meedoen vrijwillig is en dat ik elk moment kan stoppen.
- ☐ Ik wil meedoen aan het onderzoek.
- ☐ Ik geef toestemming voor het maken van foto's van het materiaal gebruikt in de sessie. Ik zal hierin niet herkenbaar zichtbaar zijn.

Ik ga akkoord met bovenstaande informatie, zoals vermeld in deze informatiebrief of in het informatiefilmpje.

Hieronder hebben we nog een extra vraag. Goed om te weten: je kunt met het project meedoen ook al ga je niet akkoord met de vraag hieronder.

- ☐ Ik ga akkoord dat mijn onderzoeksgegevens (zonder naam) gedeeld worden met onderzoekers buiten het project.

  Ja / Nee

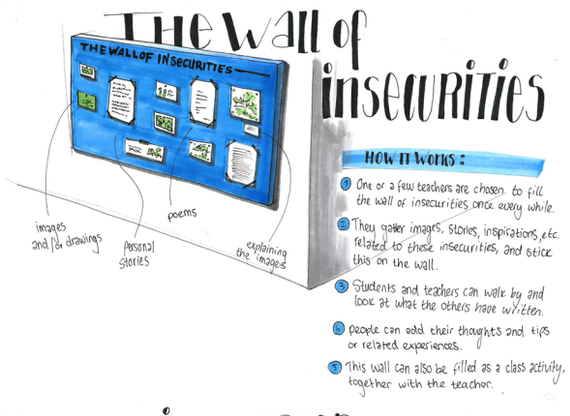
Vermeld hieronder je gegevens:
Voornaam:
Achternaam:

Datum:

Handtekening:

ATT. 11: Ideas

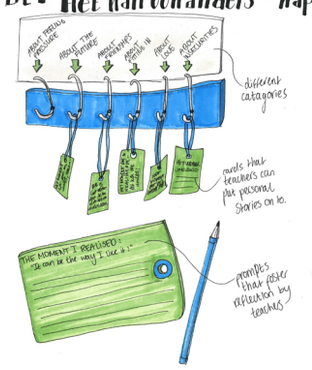
The Wall of insecurities



HOW IT WORKS:

1. One or a few teachers are chosen to fill the wall of insecurities once every while.
2. They gather images, stories, inspirations, etc. related to these insecurities, and stick this on the wall.
3. Students and teachers can walk by and look at what the others have written.
4. people can add their thoughts and tips or related experiences.
5. This wall can also be filled as a class activity, together with the teachor.

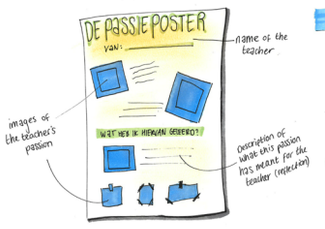
DE - "Het kan cokanders" - kapstok



HOW IT WORKS:

1. The teacher reflects on each topic, about a realization moment that helped them with changing a negative mindset through a realization, into something positive.
2. They write about this on the template card.
3. They hang the card on the 'coat rack'
4. Students who come in class can take a look at the teachers' stories
5. The cards can also act as conversation starters.

The passion poster



HOW IT WORKS:

1. Teachers receive a poster to fill out.
2. They choose a passion outside of the course they give, and write on the poster about this.
3. They stick images on to make it visual.
4. They hang the poster in the classroom
5. Students can get to know a bit of the teacher/beside the given course.

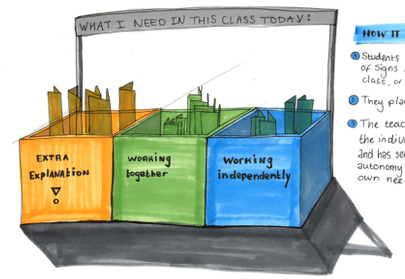
THE MOTIVATION TREE



HOW IT WORKS

1. Teachers reflect on things that make them feel motivated. It can also be done with students.
2. They write this on small papers, and put them in the Motivation Tree.
3. The tree is placed in a classroom or hallway.
4. Students walk by and can pick a motivation "Leaf" if they feel that they need it.
5. They get inspiration and motivation to learn and enjoy their time in school.

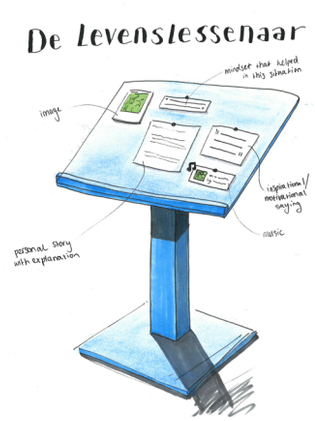
THE NEED BASKET



HOW IT WORKS:

1. Students pick one of the colours of Signs from the beginning of class, or after explanation.
2. They place it on their table.
3. The teacher now knows better the individual needs of students and has see the example on guiding autonomy and coming up for your own needs.

De Levenslessenaar



HOW IT WORKS

1. Reflect on a thing in life or a moment that you felt insecure, down or stressed.
2. Take a picture, photo or something that represents this moment or thing. You can also find music, a poem, an article, a quote or song or any thing else you find interesting and that has something to do with the topic. Collect it.
3. Write an explanation of why you chose these objects/images/texts.
4. Place it on the "Levenslessenaar" to showcase it to students, either anonimously or with your name.
5. Next month, someone else provides the lessons on the Levenslessenaar.

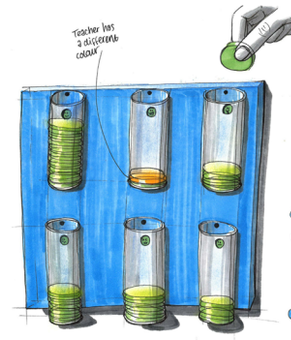
BLANKETS OF EXTRA CARE



HOW IT WORKS:

1. Teachers put the basket in their classroom
2. Students come in class, and take a blanket if they need to.
3. There are only a few, so students need to keep blankets for those who really need it
4. Teachers know who needs a bit more care and students see it too.

The Emotion meter



HOW IT WORKS:

1. The emotion meter is put up at the door of a classroom.
2. Students grab a coin when they come in, and put it in the tube representing their mood
3. The teacher also puts in their mood.
4. Now, the teacher and class have an overview of how general everyone is feeling. If there is a day where way more people feel sad, teachers can talk about the moods with the class.
5. Teachers can also give more options or change the class according to the moods.

The Motivation Machine

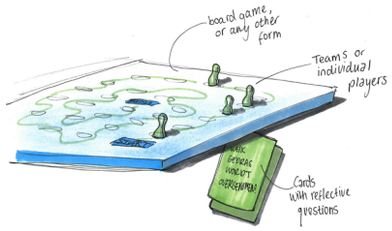


HOW IT WORKS:

1. Teachers write motivational quotes and Stories on small pieces of paper.
2. They fold it and place it in a little ball.
3. The balls are put into the machine.
4. Students can take a ball out of the machine when they need a bit of encouragement/motivation.

The Role model game

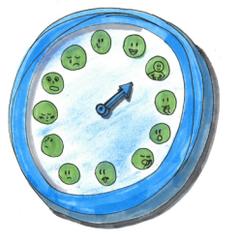
FOR TEACHER TEAMS



HOW IT WORKS:

1. This game is provided to teams of teachers, potentially on a study day for teachers.
2. By playing the game, the teachers have to reflect on how they think they are a role model.
3. The game includes provocative questions for reflection and information.
4. The teachers start thinking more about their function as role model and can apply it in their upcoming classes.

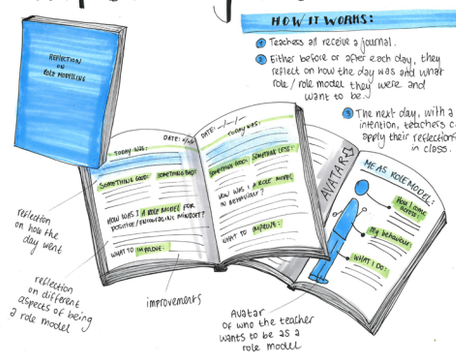
THE EMOTION CLOCK



HOW IT WORKS:

1. Before the day starts, or before each class, the teacher takes a moment to reflect on their emotion.
2. They turn the clock hand to the corresponding emotion.
3. When students come in, they see that a teacher is not always feeling positive, and they can talk about it. Or a teacher is feeling good, and they explain how and why this is.
4. It opens up conversations about feelings, in particular on days that are harder, which are also part of life.

Reflective journal



HOW IT WORKS:

1. Teachers all receive a journal.
2. Either before or after each day, they reflect on how the day was and what role / role model they were and want to be.
3. The next day, with a new intention, teachers can apply their reflections in class.

ATT. 12: Interview guide idea evaluation

Interview guideline Teachers

Introductie (5 min)

Goedendag, welkom!

Allereerst, wat super fijn dat u hiervoor tijd wilde vrijmaken. Mijn naam is Eefje Eikelenboom, ik ben een student aan de Technische Universiteit Delft, binnen de faculteit Industrieel Ontwerpen. Ik ben momenteel bezig met mijn master Design for Interaction, waarbij ik nu ben begonnen met mijn afstudeeronderzoek.

Dit doe ik vanuit het initiatief Healthy Start, opgezet als samenwerking tussen TU Delft, Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam en Erasmus Medisch Centrum. Dit onderzoek valt binnen het onderwerp jongerenwelzijn.

(Specifiek ben ik aan het onderzoeken wat de invloed en rol is van docenten op jongerenwelbevinden.) Ik ben daarvoor ontzettend benieuwd naar uw ervaringen in het onderwijs. Daarover gaat dit onderzoek.

Belangrijk om te weten is dat er geen goed of fout is. Ik stel de vragen puur om meer inzicht te krijgen in de wereld van het onderwijs op middelbare scholen. Alle antwoorden zijn daarom nuttig.

Het kan zijn dat ik een extra vraag stel, waarvan u misschien denkt dat het een herhaling is. Dit is dan ook omdat ik zeker wil weten dat ik uw gedachten goed volg en begrepen heb.

Ik zou u ook willen vragen of ik dit gesprek mag opnemen. De data en de opname worden puur voor het verwerken van het onderzoek gebruikt. De resultaten zullen worden geanonimiseerd.

Als laatste een check of u de consent form heeft getekend.

Super. Dan gaan we nu beginnen. Het onderzoek bestaat uit 5 onderdelen.

Deel 1: Intro en algemeen (5 min)

We starten met een algemene introductie. (Ik stel ook wat persoonlijkere vragen, om een beeld van uw context als persoon te krijgen. Indien u liever geen antwoord op deze vragen geeft, geef dat vooral aan, dan gaan we door met de volgende vraag.)

1. Kunt u uzelf voorstellen?
    a. Wat is uw leeftijd?
    b. Kunt u in één zin wat meer over uzelf vertellen, bijvoorbeeld woonsituatie, hobby's?
    c. Woont u in de buurt van de school?
    d. Heeft u zelf ook kinderen? Zo ja, hoeveel?
2. Kunt u wat meer over uw functie vertellen?
    a. Welke functie heeft u binnen het onderwijs?
    b. Welke vakken geeft u?
    c. Hoe lang werkt u al in het onderwijs?
3. Bent u ook mentor van een klas?

2. Rolmodellen (15 min)

4. Wat verstaat u onder het woord 'rolmodel'?
    a. Welke rolmodellen hebben leerlingen, volgens u?
5. Heeft u het idee dat u een rolmodel bent voor sommige leerlingen?
    a. Ja → Op wat voor manier? En waar merkt u dat aan?
    b. Nee → Waarom niet? Wie zijn rolmodellen voor uw leerlingen?
6. Wat voor eigenschappen zijn belangrijk in deze functie als rolmodel, volgens u?
7. Als u een tip mocht geven aan andere docenten over hoe zij een rolmodel voor welbevinden kunnen zijn, wat zou dat dan zijn?
    a. Wat moet een docent kunnen of weten?
    b. Wat moet een docent juist niet doen?
8. Hoe ziet u het zijn van een rolmodel voor het verbeteren van het mentaal welzijn van leerlingen?

3. Conceptrichtingen (30 min)

Ik heb een aantal tekeningen van concepten meegenomen. Ze zijn bedoelt om leraren te laten begrijpen en reflecteren op wat hun mindset omtrent welzijn is, en hoe ze die als rolmodel kunnen overbrengen aan leerlingen. Ik zou graag aan je willen vragen of je ze op volgorde zou willen leggen van meeste naar minste potentie, en hardop na te denken terwijl je dit doet. Geef hierbij vooral aan waarom je de keuzes maakt, welke onderdelen je wel of niet aanspreken en je eerste gedachtes. Ik kan jou eerlijke feedback gebruiken om het idee te verbeteren, dus wees helemaal vrij in alles wat je zegt. Kritiek is voor mij alleen maar fijn, want hierdoor kom ik erachter of het idee wel of niet werkt. Ik ben tenslotte zelf niet actief op de middelbare school.

- In de klas, of op de gang?
- Een reflectie oefening voor thuis alleen, of in een team op school?
- Anoniem, of met jou naam erbij?
- Iets voor alle leraren, of voor degene die hierin geïnteresseerd zijn?
- Iets concreets voor de leerling, dus wat zij kunnen zien/lezen/pakken, of eerder iets om als docent individueel te reflecteren, en daarna zelf (indirect) te gebruiken in interacties met leerlingen?

(4. School protocollen omtrent welbevinden)

9. Komt een leerling wel eens naar u toe met problemen of zorgen?
    Ja →
        a. Kunt u meer vertellen over de situatie? Een voorbeeld noemen?
        b. Wat doet u in zon situatie?
        c. Zijn er bepaalde protocollen die u op zo'n moment moet volgen?
        d. Waar heeft u op dat moment behoefde aan?
        e. Waar heeft de leerling op dat moment behoefde aan?
        f. Heeft u het idee dat u de leerling op zo'n moment voldoende kan ondersteunen?
        g. Is er iets dat u mist in zo'n situatie?
    Nee →
        h. Hoe vind u dat?
        i. Heeft u een idee waardoor dit zou kunnen komen?
10. Naar wie kunt u zelf gaan om over dit situaties of zorgen rondom leerlingen te praten?
    a. Zijn er daarvoor regelingen/protocollen op de school? Wat vind u daarvan?
    b. En op dat moment, waar heeft u dan behoefde aan?

Deel 5: Afsluiting (5 min)

We komen tegen het einde van het interview. Als laatste wil ik u nog een slotvraag stellen.

11. Als u nu een verbetering zou kunnen doorvoeren op school om het mentale welzijn van leerlingen te verbeteren, wat zou dat dan zijn?
        a. Welke elementen weerhouden dit ervan om geïmplementeerd te worden?
12. Heeft u nog andere dingen die u zou willen delen over het welbevinden van jongeren op de middelbare school? Zijn er dingen waar ik nog niet naar gevraagd heb, die wellicht wel interessant kunnen zijn voor het onderzoek?
13. Heeft u zelf nog vragen of opmerkingen?

Dan wil ik u nogmaals hartelijk bedanken voor uw antwoorden en tijd. Het is voor mij ontzettend waardevol om over uw ervaringen te horen.

Met behulp van uw antwoorden ga ik proberen in kaart te brengen wat de invloed en functie is van de leraar als rolmodel voor de mentale gezondheid van jongeren, en ik hoop daarna met nuttige ideeën en oplossingen te komen waar scholen, leraren en leerlingen wat aan hebben.

ATT. 13: Focus group procedure

1. **Welcome and introduction (5 min)**
   In this part, the research purpose was explained, along with some background on the facilitator. The participants were welcomed, and the voluntary nature of participation was highlighted, along with the session's aim: to gain insights to improve the concepts. It was emphasised that honest feedback and critiques were appreciated to reduce social bias and help participants feel comfortable sharing their honest opinions. Then, an introduction round was held to get to know all the participants.

2. **Discussing role models and well-being (15 min)**
   The second part consisted of some introductory questions about role modelling. What the participants think about when hearing the word 'role model', if they would see themselves as role models, and what function they think role models could have for student well-being. The aim of this part was to gain further insight into the participants' opinions on role models and to familiarise them with the topic.

3. **Prototype discussion on 'I like, I wish, I wonder' (30 min)**
   In the next part, the facilitator explained the prototypes and drawings one by one. Then, the participants were asked to think aloud while writing down some 'likes', 'wishes', and 'wonders' of each concept. We discussed each note, and additional questions were asked.

4. **Preference (5 min)**
   In the last part, the participants were asked about their preferred concept. Together, they were asked to rank the concepts from most to least promising and think aloud while doing that. Their reasoning was asked.

5. **Closing (5 min)**
   After ranking, the session concluded with thanks to the participants and an explanation of the next steps in the process. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions.

ATT. 14: Final teacher evaluation slides

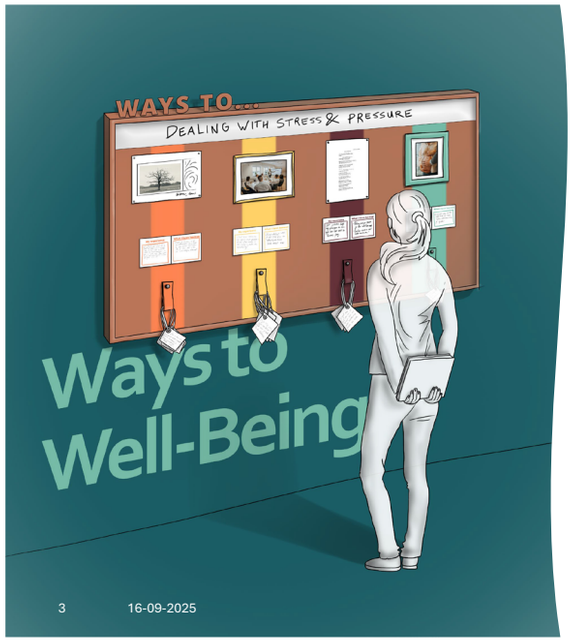




Introductie

- Docenten kunnen rolmodellen zijn, maar worden niet altijd als rolmodellen herkend
- Wat is nodig:
  - **Expliciet** maken van hetgeen 'gemodelleerd' wordt, voor docenten en leerlingen
  - Laten zien **waarom** het belangrijk is om de 'manieren' (gedrag, mentaliteit, etc.) over te nemen
  - Laten zien **hoe** die manieren kunnen worden overgenomen
- Rondom welzijnsthema's zoals prestatiedruk, stress, onzekerheid
- Functie: Gedragsmodel, representatie dat iets mogelijk is, en/of inspiratie

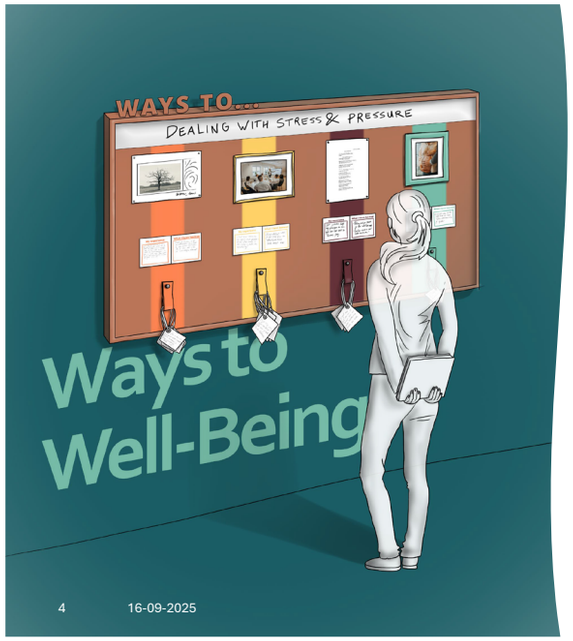
Healthy Start



3 16-09-2025

Wegen naar welzijn

1. **Kies de wegwijzers (4 docenten) per keer.**
2. **Kies een bestemming:**
   - Omgaan met druk, zorgen en stress.
   - Zelfvertrouwen vergroten.
   - Gevoel van impact, doel en betekenis vergroten
   - Jezelf zijn, laten zien wie je bent of kunt zijn.
   - Een band met anderen creëren.
   - Veerkracht vergroten.
   - ...Of iets anders!
3. **Reflecteer op jouw ervaringen uit het verleden, toen je zelf 'onderweg' hiernaartoe was.**
4. **Schrijf 'navigatie-kaarten' voor leerlingen.**
5. **Laat de wegen naar welzijn zien door je reflective en navigatiekaarten op het prikbord te hangen.**



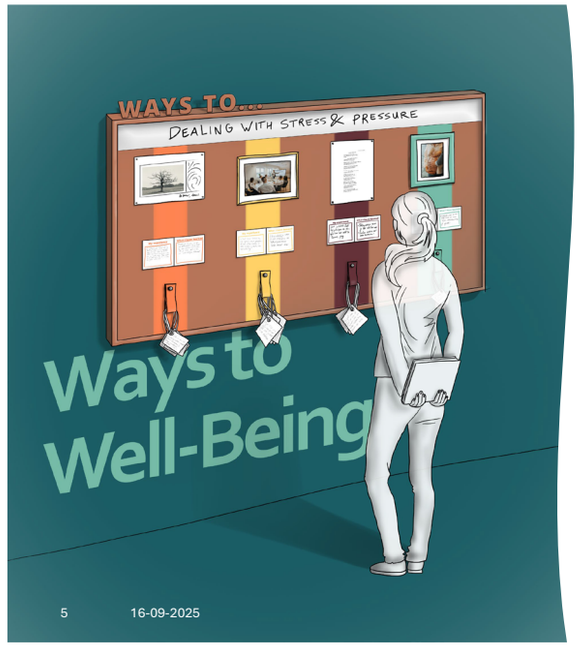
4 16-09-2025

Feedback op het concept

De kaartjes moeten worden mee gegeven aan leerlingen.

vs.

De kaartjes moeten vast blijven hangen.



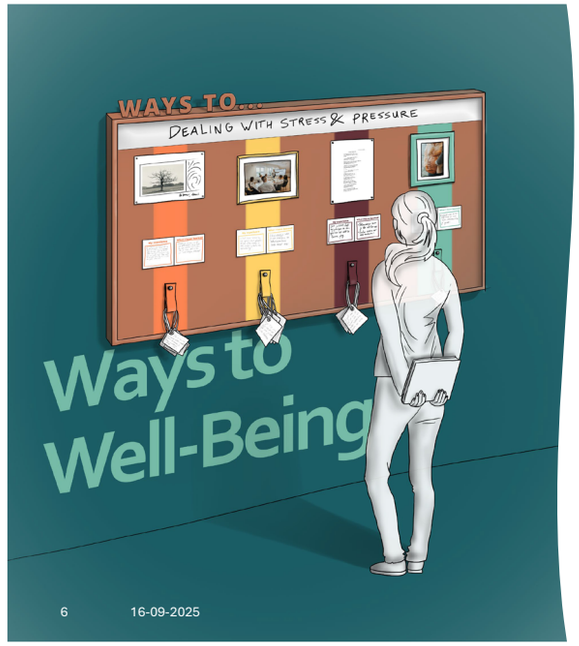
5 16-09-2025

Feedback op het concept

Dit concept hangt in de gang

Vs.

Dit concept hangt in een lokaal



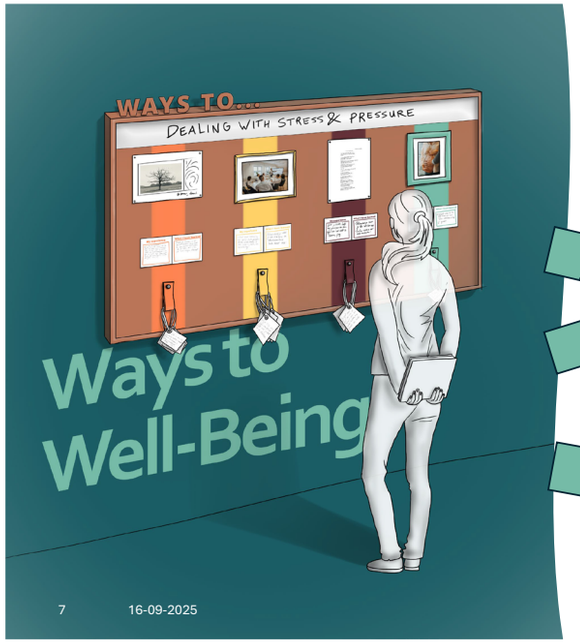
6 16-09-2025

Feedback op het concept

Dit is een werkvorm voor in een mentorles, waarin je na de persoonlijke reflectie als docent(en) de navigatiekaarten met leerlingen samen gaat maken.

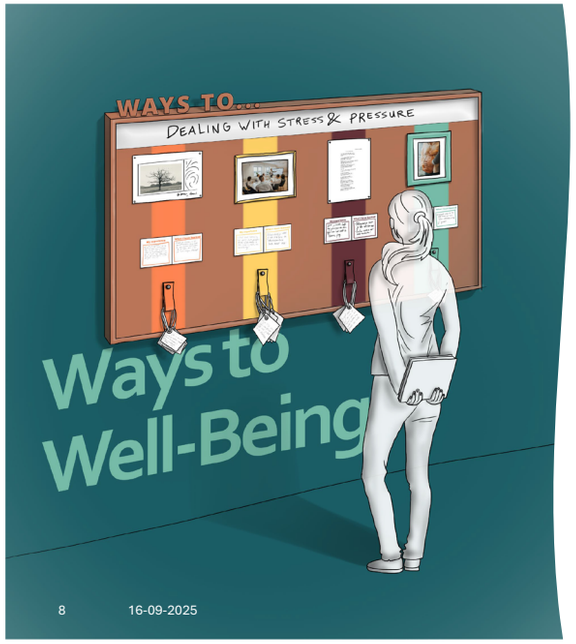
Vs.

Dit is een persoonlijke opdracht voor docenten naar leerlingen toe, waarbij leerlingen vooral betrokken zijn door de uitkomsten te kunnen zien en hierover in gespek kunnen gaan.



Feedback op het concept

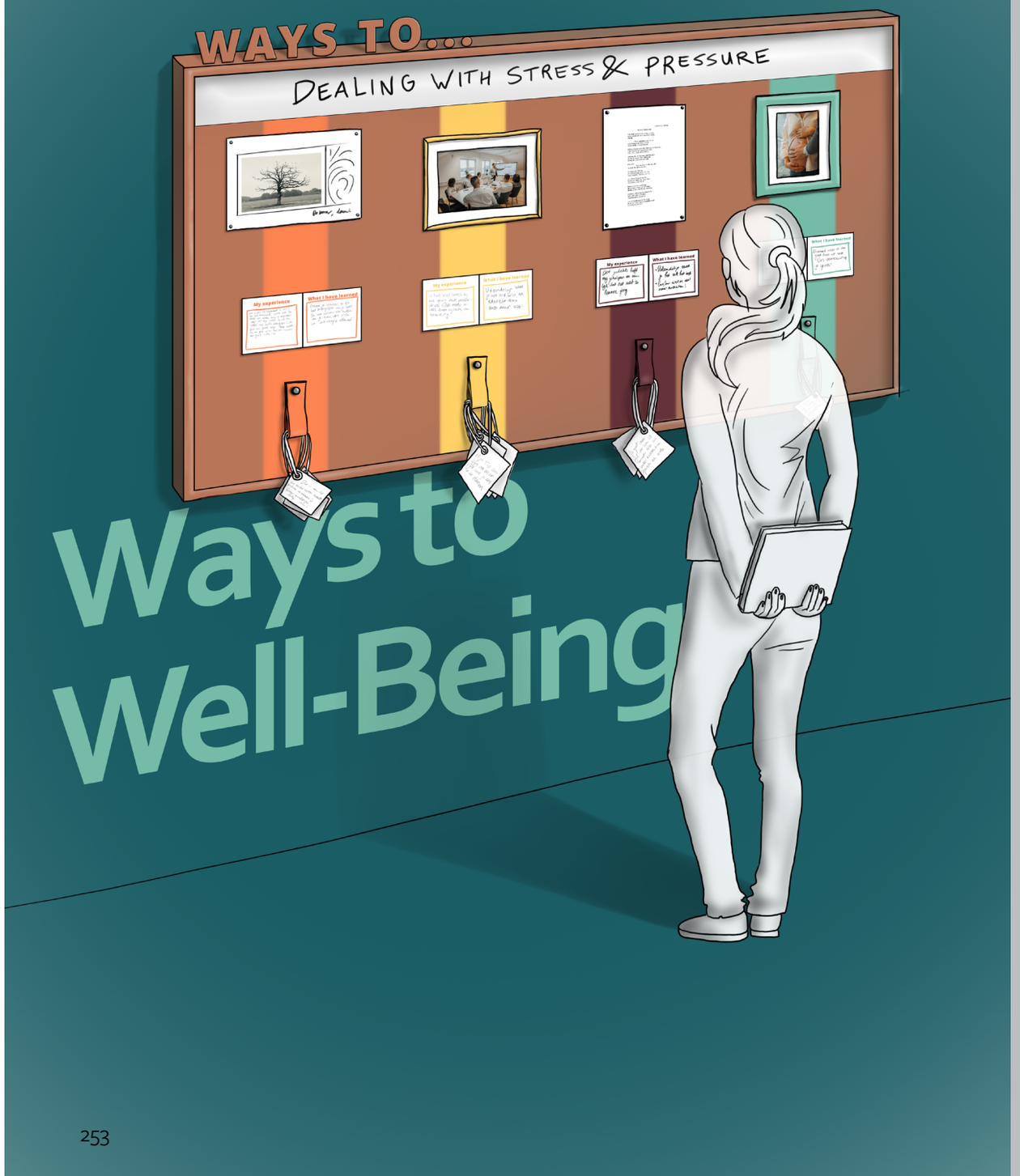
- **I like:**
  - Wat vind ik leuk aan het concept?
  - Welke elementen moet sowieso blijven?
- **I wish:**
  - Wat zou ik graag willen zien bij de uitwerking hiervan?
  - Wat mis ik?
  - Op welke manieren moet dit (niet) worden geïmplementeerd?
  - Wat moet worden veranderd of toegevoegd?
- **I wonder:**
  - Ik heb nog vraagtekens bij...
  - Ik twijfel over...
  - Wat is onduidelijk?
  - Welke dingen zouden verder moeten worden onderzocht?



Ik ben heel benieuwd naar jullie eerlijke mening en ideeën, dus kom vooral nog even na-kletsen!

Ik zoek ook nog mensen voor een pilot-test, dus mocht je hieraan mee willen doen, laat het me weten ☺

ATT. 15: Design drawing for final teacher evaluation



ATT. 16: Ideas & evaluation

Next, all the ideas are shown, with their Positive (P), negative (M), and Interesting (I) aspects.

Emotion meter

P:

- It directly involves students.
- It is a good conversation tool to talk about well-being outside of learning goals.
- As a teacher/school, with this product you convey the message that it matters how you feel as a student.
- It makes the teacher aware of how everyone in class is doing.
- It does not cost a lot of time.
- Students can communicate anonymously how they feel.
- It is not about how you feel in the context of didactics, but more general.
- The physicality of the tool causes a different type of conversation then for example a conversation led by digital slides. It is always there

M:

- At some point this might be repetitive and not interesting anymore for students.
- By thinking and talking more about how you feel, mild symptoms could become worse (Foulkes and Andrews, 2023). This might also be the case if the biggest part of the group feels negative, that the others are more likely to feel that too. However, the opposite could also be true, highlighting the need to further research this effect.

I:

- Teachers could have a coin with a different colour, to also show how they feel in comparison to the rest of the class.

'I think this one is really cool, I like it a lot, I'm really excited about it.' – Bart, teacher

'If you hang this up in your classroom, at the entrance or wherever, you immediately convey that it matters how you feel as a student, because we [teachers] consider that a prerequisite for teaching at all.' – Bart, teacher

'I think this sets an example, and I also think it helps you as a teacher to become more aware of how the class is doing. And it doesn't take much time at all; in fact, it might be nice that you can do it quickly without everyone seeing how you are doing.' – Bart, teacher

'You have these digital resources, but the physical aspect creates a different conversation, one that is less fleeting. You see this product hanging on the wall throughout the entire class.'

'You indicate that there is room for how you feel, but you are not yet showing it yourself.'

'I would make sure that all students have the same colour, and then I wonder if, as a teacher with a different colour, you might be able to see afterwards whether, for example, your mood also has a significant influence on the mood of the group, or whether it makes a difference whether you put it in first or last.'

'I find it strong that this one has nothing to do with didactics.'

Wall of Insecurities

P:

- Easy to implement, because these boards are hanging in schools already.
- As a student it is easy to 'accidentally' look at the content on the board, it does not stand out too much.
- If the school wants to make well-being more open to discussion, this could be a good way to show that they also open up as teachers themselves.
- Does not cost much time or effort.

M:

- It is very personal to write insecurities down, which could be holding people back of taking part in it.
- The vulnerability could encourage bullying. A safe school environment is required, especially for students to take part.
- Again, being more aware of well-being issues could cause mild symptoms to become worse (Foulkes and Andrews, 2023).

I:

- A rotation system could be set up, to have different teachers and/or classes to take part after each other.

'I think this is a good example because it is so easy to implement. It's basically, well, why not? If you think that conversations about well-being among pupils should be easier, this is an ideal way to give the right example yourself.'

'I can just picture you having a notice board where teachers have written something down and pinned it up, and every now and then one comes down or a new one is added. Dynamic, or with a kind of rotation system where classes take turns.'

'If students start taking photos of that board and it contains very personal information, this could also encourage bullying. So there should be no coercive element to it, and the school environment must be safe enough.'

'Het-kan-ook-anders'-Coat Rack

P:

- The topics can be tailored to the issues of a specific group of students. So it is easy to personalize, which could make the tips more helpful and relevant.
- The high quality of the written cards, the thicker paper, make it less likely that a students throws the cards out after reading them.
- Could be used after individual conversations with students, in a class dedicated to discuss the evaluation of these conversations.
- Students can read this at their own time.
- It fits well in the context of a classroom/school.

M:

- Students change classrooms, so it is less likely and more vulnerable to leave the cards hanging if students do not immediately want to take them, do not feel that they need it yet, or have not finished writing.

I:

- In primary schools, the product can be left hanging in the classroom, which is beneficial because then students can get a card that they need at any given moment during the day.
- This idea could be interesting as working method, for example in a mentor-class.

'Every so often, we have "portfolio discussions", where students sometimes bring up big issues, such as finding it difficult to make friends in class. You could collect a number of problems and then devote a mentor class to these topics by writing cards for each other. (...) I would really want to use this immediately.'

'This is also really feasible.'

'Problems can vary considerably from group to group, and this idea allows you to tailor the advice to the problems of the students. So that they don't get these comprehensive life lessons, but something really tailored to their lives.'

Passion poster

P:

- It shows something personal of the teacher.
- Is not vulnerable or too tense for teachers to take part.
- Very easy to implement.
- This could enhance the student-teacher relationship, and thus enforce student (and teacher) well-being.
- Could provide hope for students that they will also enjoy their passions like that in the future.

M:

- It does not have to deal with students directly.
- It could cause students to feel more insecure when they feel that they cannot find their passion or purpose.
- It is coupled to a specific classroom, and often teachers teach in different classrooms.

I:

- These posters could also be hanging through the school in stead of in classrooms, or be combined with the Insecurity Wall.

'I immediately think that me and my colleague, with whom I share this classroom, should just do this, because there is nothing personal here yet. (...) However, in many classrooms, lessons are taught by a wide variety of teachers, so I think it would be more difficult to implement in many other classrooms.'

Motivation Tree

P:

- You can read the tips in your own time.
- It has a surprise element to it, because you don't know what the card will say.
- It gives information and could inspire.
- You can sneak-peak at the cards, to make sure you get one that aligns with your needs.

M:

- It could easily feel like a craft project that stands in the classroom all year.
- It might become too big.

I:

- A group of unmotivated students could be asked to grab a card from the Motivation Tree, to get them motivated.

'Suppose you have a group assignment with a class and there is a group that has motivation problems, then you can say: "Everyone, take a card from the Motivation Tree." I see it as like the Kletspot, a jar where you can draw inspiration or information from.' – Bart, teacher

'I like this idea, because there is a surprise-effect in it, you don't know what will be on the card' – Bart, teacher

'This feels more like a "Sinterklaas-surprise" [craftwork] that stays in your classroom all year round.'

The Motivation Machine

P:

- The tips are broadly applicable.
- It has a surprise element.

M:

- The tips are broadly applicable, making the chance that it really helps you personally, smaller.
- Cannot be divided into multiple themes.
- A small, folded paper that comes out of this machine, could more easily be thrown out.
- You cannot peek what is on the card.

'I think the tree is better, because then you can still peek a little at what kind of card you would like. (...) If the tip is written in very broad terms, it can apply to everyone, but perhaps that is precisely why it doesn't help.'

'When I see a vending machine, I imagine something that you throw away immediately, whereas with the tree, it feels more like something you keep or give back.'

Role Model Game

P:

- Provides insights and reflection in a fun way.

M:

- It cost a lot of time to do this game.
- The role model game is not a direct student-teacher role modelling solution.
- The game is very implicit when it comes to improving well-being.
- Developing a game like this needs a lot of time and iterations, which the scope and timeframe of the project do not allow.

I:

- The game could be implemented on a specific study-day for teachers, dedicated to a related topic.

'My immediate thought is: nice idea, but no one will do it. Because everyone is already so busy. Unless you introduce it on a study day, where the whole day is devoted to this topic and you then play a number of these games with a supervisor present.'

Need Baskets

P:

- It is useful for providing more autonomy to students.

M:

- It has a less strong connection to well-being, more implicit.

I:

- When this would be implemented, the connection to well-being should be emphasized.

'I like these and think they are good, but I don't really feel the connection with the subject of mental health.'

De Levenslessenaar

P:

- Shows something personal about a teacher.
- It teaches something to students about life.

M:

- It is quite prominent, so it catches attention when a student is standing next to it, which is less private.
- It is less easy to implement then just hanging this information on the wall.

I:

- This could be an easy 'task' to give to teachers in the newsletter, to let someone write a piece about a life lesson to help other teachers or students.

'When you stand at one of these lecterns, others can immediately see that you are standing there, so you can easily experience a kind of peer pressure.' – Bart, teacher

'This stands as prominently as a lectern, whereas a wall, well, you might accidentally glance at that too.'

The Emotion clock

P:

- It shows that teachers might also have off-days.
- It could open up conversations.

M:

- The feeling of the teacher becomes too important.
- It does not involve students.
- It could undermine the teacher's professionalism.

I:

- Combination with the Emotion Meter could be interesting, where then the teacher also shows their mood as well as students.

'I feel that this idea overemphasises my feelings as a teacher, makes them too important. Suppose something very traumatic had happened. I believe it is part of my professionalism to remain impartial and teach with the same attitude you would expect if I were completely happy with how I feel.'

Reflective Journal

P:
- For starting teachers, it could be useful to reflect more in this way.
- For a specific group, this could be nice.

M:
- It is very non-committal.
- It does not involve students, or sharing.
- It does not break a taboo.

I:
- The journal could be connected to a specific working method, or school broad agreements.
- The journal could combine research insights and reflection.

'Perhaps it is a very specific group that would do this, but I would not do it myself. Because it takes time, and is perhaps too non-committal. Because it is not something you should share, it is something for yourself.'

Blankets of Care

P:
- Shows to students that the school cares about how they are feeling.
- Could be a conversation starter.

M:
- Could easily be misused.
- Difficult to enforce the real purpose.

'A grey area arises where students can put on their hoods and put their feet up on the table, as if to say, "Yes, but sir, I do have a blanket over me, don't I?". So this is more difficult to enforce.'

ATT. 17: Concept evaluation outcomes

Well-being Wall

This concept combines the 'Insecurity Wall', the 'Motivation Tree', 'Levenslessenaar' and 'Passion Poster'. The wall comes with a clear description of ways in which it can be organised, for example, the topics of 'dealing with stress/insecurity', 'life lessons', 'finding motivation', or 'passions outside of school'. This allows the school or teacher to choose which topic they want to highlight on the wall. The person responsible for the content on the wall will receive an instructional kit with prompts on how to fill up the wall so that it taps into the aspects of well-being and role modelling.

Reduces stress & pressure amongst youth:

By showing the ways of dealing with stress/insecurities, life lessons, motivational insights or the passion of others, students are able to put things into perspective and get practical tips for the future.

Role model construct:

Behavioural Model: The wall should acquire kinds of behaviour that help the creator of the wall with their well-being and the topic that is chosen, and could therefore also help students.
Representation of the Possible: The wall should represent that there are more people who struggle with these types of issues, and that there are ways to get over it.
Inspiration: The wall could inspire students in new ways of dealing with their well-being issues.

Evaluation

Likes:
1. It gives a nice overview of what others appreciate.
2. It could make the teacher more human for the students.
3. The openness, the sharing and inspiring of others through this idea.
4. Good to implement as project in mentor classes, or in teachers' study-days.

Wishes:
5. It should take into account that things like insecurities will be too vulnerable for students to open up about.
6. It would be nice to work with this as a project, for example in a mentor class.
7. It would be great to have a wall with images that express emotions.

Wonders:
8. Which types of insecurities or well-being aspects should be shared?
9. How can this be brought to the different classes?
10. How could this be used as a project?

Mood Meter

The mood meter is an iteration on the 'Emotion Meter' and 'Emotion Clock', where the mood meter also includes the mood of the teacher. The Mood Meter is hung up next to the classroom door, and provides students with coins that they can put inside of the tube corresponding to their mood at the start of each class. It can be a tool for teachers to start a conversation when the mood is worse then usual, and to discuss how to improve this mood. It can also simply be a meter to get more insight in the moods of the students and the class as a whole, for students to see that there is always people with better or worse days.

Reduces stress & pressure amongst youth:
The Mood Meter gives insight in the mood of the students and teacher, and could open up conversations if the mood is negative. Then, a teacher has a physical starting point for the improvement of the overall mood. For example, when students are very stressed about their Maths exam, and they all feel this suddenly in the Maths class, the teacher can try reassuring the students, whereas otherwise the teacher would have just started the class.

Role model construct:
Behavioural Model: The Mood Meter shows the behavioural norm of discussing and caring about the students' feelings. It furthermore could open up conversations that could provide students with tools to improve their moods.
Representation of the Possible: The Mood Meter represents that not everyone is only feeling good and happy all the time, including the teacher. Something that for example social media could be falsely communicating to youth.
Inspiration: The Mood Meter could inspire students to open up about their feelings, and could show students that talking about feelings could actually improve their mood.

Evaluation
Likes:
11. The teacher gets a good overview of the mood and dynamics in the classroom.
12. The tool could give insights into the cause of the group dynamics.
13. The teacher also can indicate what their mood is.
14. Physically showing how everyone is feeling is nice, and the physicality makes it more easy to use.
15. Making it easier to talk about well-being and struggles, through this tool.
16. Checking-in every day with students.

Wishes:
17. There are too many coins, they should not get lost or discarded.
18. No loose material, because that encourages messing around.
19. This could be digitalized, and it already is.

Wonders:
20. Will the dynamics in the groups change if they know how the group as a whole is feeling?
21. Is this for all ages?
22. Can we show the mood in a different manner?
23. Is this not too repetitive with the digital tools that are already there?

Helping Hangers

Helping Hangers combines the 'Motivation Tree' with the 'Het kan ook anders-Kapstok', the 'Motivation Machine', 'Levenslessenaar' and the 'Insecurity Wall'. The Hanger is put up in the classroom and provides room at the top of the hanger to note down issues that students might be struggling with, and hooks below, to hang up tips corresponding with these issues. Helping Hangers comes with cards and strings in different colours. The concept can be used by teachers, teacher teams, or together with students. The concept is used in a mentor class, on a teacher study-day, or after class.

Firstly, the teacher writes down one or a few issues that students are struggling with. This could be the overarching well-being issues as discussed in this report, but it could also be common issues

that the teacher has heard about in class, in one-on-one student-teacher conversations, or in conversations with parents. The teacher, teacher team or class as a whole then try to come up with tips that could help students with these issues, and write them on the cards. They have to take in mind what has helped themselves in similar situations as the issue they are writing for. The cards are put up on the corresponding hooks. At the end of the session, students can take one card from the hook with the issue that they feel they need the most help with. The cards can be taken home.
The Helping Hangers can also be used by and for teachers themselves. Then, the cards might not directly influence student well-being, but they could help teachers to learn from each other when they struggle with certain issues or situations in school. The teachers write down common issues at the top, such as 'keeping balance between autonomy and structure'. Then they all write down tips that they have experienced or used in their own career, and hang them up. Other teachers can then take a card.

Reduces stress & pressure amongst youth:
Helping Hangers could directly provide youth with tips for a better well-being, to reduce stress, pressure or insecurities, as it provides tangible real-life situations and experiences of others that have helped them before.

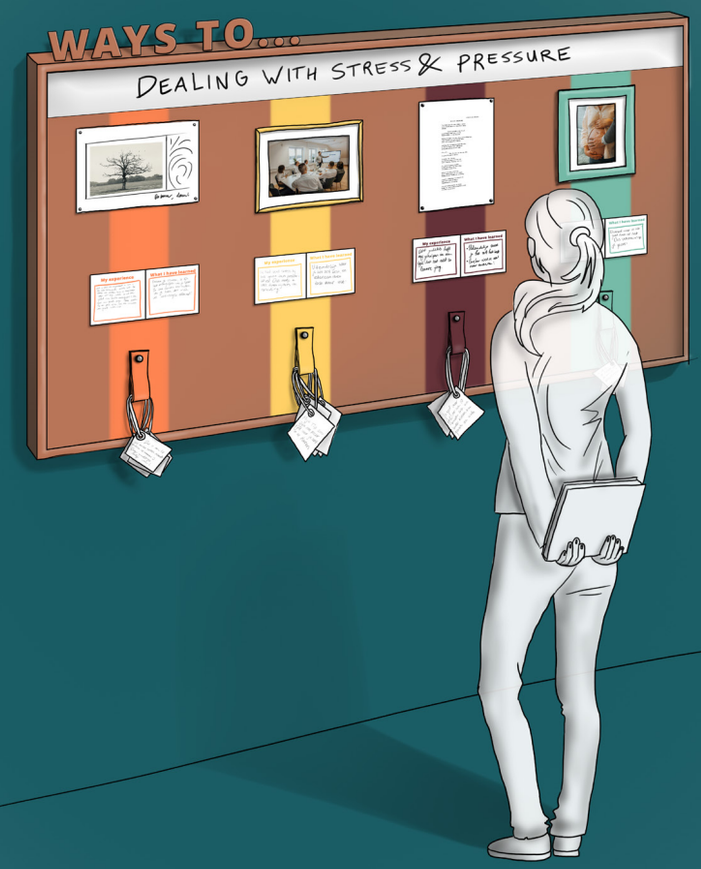
Role model construct:
Behavioural Model: Helping Hangers provides tips that could help students learn behaviour from each other or from their teacher in problematic situations. For example, 'going for a walk' is something that helps a teacher to decrease stress, which through the helping hangers is taught to students.
Representation of the Possible: The Helping Hangers represent that you are never alone in experiencing certain issues, and that others sometimes have experienced the same and could therefore help you to feel better. The teachers could represent that it is possible to feel better of solve an issue, by writing down their stories, solutions and tips on the cards.
Inspiration: Helping Hangers could provide students with new ideas of how to solve or deal with their issues, and the teacher (or other students) can therefore act as inspiration for them.

Evaluation
Likes:
- It is visible, and therefore easy to start conversations about well-being issues.
- The categories give themes to the conversations, and that is nice to give personalized tips.
- This could be used by and for students, or by teachers.

Wishes:
- A good template would be needed for especially younger students, to know what to write down, as they find it hard to write down how they feel.
- The concept should be made so that it can be used in different classrooms (for example, digital), as teachers do not have the same classrooms when they teach.
- A fixed weekly moment to actually work with this and talk about well-being.

Wonders:
- Will students find it more easy to start conversations with this tool?
- Would it work to put this in the teacher room, to help teachers?
- How would this look and what would be needed for the different types of education (VMBO, Havo, VWO)?

WEGEN NAAR WELZIJN

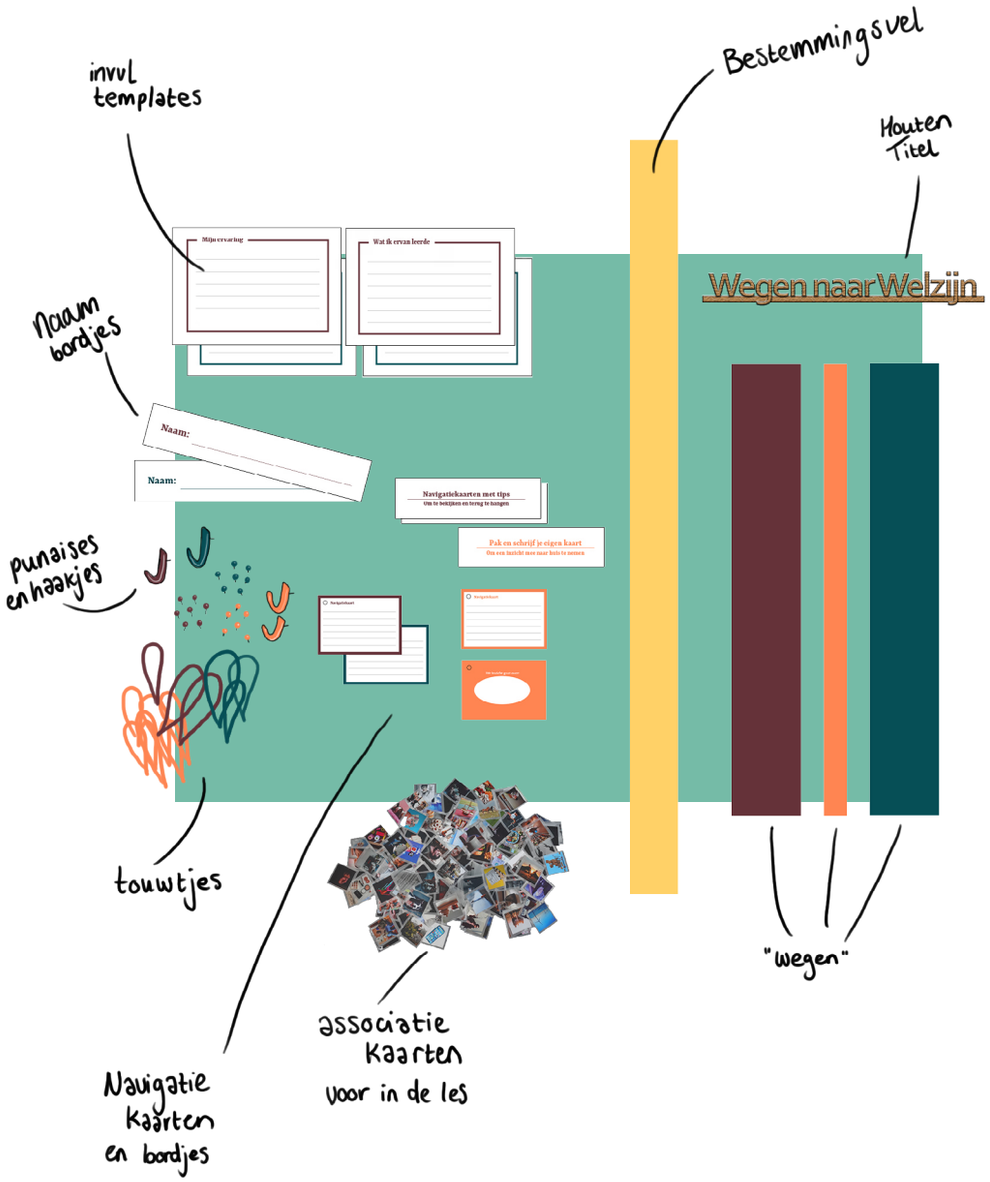


INSTRUCTIE VOOR LERAREN

Door Eefje Eikelenboom
Technische Universiteit Delft
In samenwerking Healthy Start, Convergence

INHOUD TOOLBOX

Wat zit er, naast deze instructie, in de box?



INHOUD INSTRUCTIEBOEKJE

Aanleiding & theorie 4

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AANLEIDING & THEORIE

Het begrijpen van de aanleiding en een stukje theorie kan het makkelijker en effectiever maken om een rolmodel voor leerlingen te zijn (Sanderse, 2013).

Het jongerenwelzijn verminderd

Het jongerenwelzijn is de afgelopen jaren afgenomen: jongeren rapporteren vaker depressieve en angstklachten en geven hun levenstevredenheid een steeds lager cijfer (Borg et al., 2024; Stevens et al., 2024). De middelbare school is een moment waar deze klachten onder jongeren voornamelijk lijken te ontstaan en verergeren (Borg et al., 2024). Onder jongeren in Nederland heeft, in 2024, 4% aangegeven er serieus over nagedacht te hebben diens leven te beëindigen. Dat is één leerling in elke klas van 25 leerlingen. Dit geeft de urgentie van het probleem weer.

De druk neemt toe, school speelt een grote rol

Jongeren geven aan voornamelijk moeite te hebben met het omgaan met stress, zorgen en (prestatie)druk, maar ook het zoeken naar betekenis en de toekomst houdt hen bezig (Green et al., 2022; State of Youth NL et al., 2025). De druk die jongeren door school ervaren is de afgelopen jaren toegenomen, waarbij in 2024 bijna de helft van de Nederlandse jongeren veel of zeer veel druk van school ervaarde, waar dit in 2009 nog door minder dan een kwart van de jongeren werd gerapporteerd (Stevens et al., 2024). Druk komt ook van buiten school, door de vele verwachtingen die op jongeren worden gelegd door de huidige maatschappij (Vermeulen et al., 2021). Daarnaast zijn er weinig rolmodellen die laten zien wanneer je 'goed genoeg' bent en een stukje identiteit meegeven, waar een jongere zich mee kan vergelijken om de druk te verlagen (Dopmeijer et al., 2023).

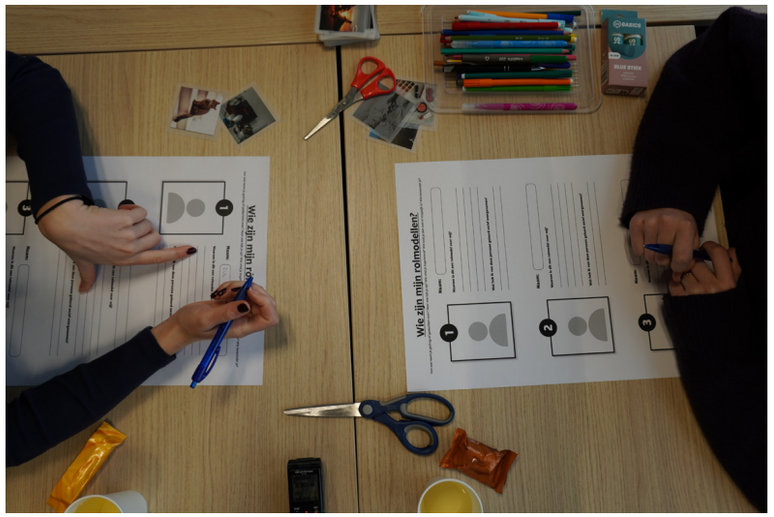
School lijkt dus een grote rol te spelen in het ervaren welzijn door jongeren. Daarnaast is de school ook in de positie om jongeren juist iets te leren over welzijn, en hun veerkracht te kunnen versterken (Peeters et al., 2022). Leraren vormen hierbij een belangrijk aanspreekpunt, en kunnen jongeren andere normen over prestatiedruk bijbrengen dan zij leren bij hen thuis of in de maatschappij. Daarnaast blijkt uit onderzoek dat het effectiever is als leraren bepaalde sociaal-emotionele interventies geven, dan mensen buiten de school om, door de band die zij met leerlingen hebben (Durlak et al., 2022).

Rolmodellen hebben positieve invloed op welzijn

Rolmodellen kunnen een positieve invloed hebben op het welzijn van jongeren, en worden momenteel al ingezet in de vorm van bijvoorbeeld theatervoorstellingen door en voor jongeren (Atif et al., 2022; Gibson, 2003; Kikid, 2025). De drie functies van een rolmodel zijn: gedrag modelleren, laten zien dat iets mogelijk is, en/of inspireren (Morgenroth et al., 2015). Dit is dus wat een rolmodel zou kunnen betekenen voor een jongere.

De leraar kan een rolmodel zijn

Jongeren kiezen in onderzoek voornamelijk hun familie als hun rolmodellen, en alleen af en toe kiezen zij ook hun leraar als rolmodel (Sanderse, 2012). Dit kan volgens de onderzoeker te maken hebben met het moment waarop jongeren dit wordt gevraagd, als zij namelijk terugkijken op de middelbareschooltijd kiezen ze vaker een leraar als rolmodel dan wanneer het hen gevraagd wordt als ze nog op school zitten. Daarnaast geeft Sanderse aan dat het kan helpen als leraren met intentie en expliciet maken wat zij als rolmodel willen laten zien. Als de leraar dus als rolmodel voor het verbeteren van welzijn zou worden ingezet, helpt het om met intentie bepaald gedrag te modelleren dat hieraan kan bijdragen, en dit ook expliciet mee te geven aan leerlingen. Dit kan extra belangrijk zijn voor leerlingen voor wie familie geen (positief) rolmodel vormen.



Tijdens het onderzoek naar rolmodellen van leerlingen.

Een voorbeeld

Een voorbeeld om het belang van de leraar te illustreren. Als een leerling vanuit huis en omgeving erg veel druk opgelegd krijgt om te presteren, omdat diens ouder bijvoorbeeld ziek is, en zij niet nog een extra last willen zijn. Een leraar kan in dit geval expliciet laten zien dat de waarde van de leerling niet van schoolprestaties afhangt, door bijvoorbeeld een perspectief te bieden en de leerling aan te moedigen. De leraar zou ook kunnen laten zien hoe diegene zelf omgaat met stress en druk, door zich kwetsbaar op te stellen, en zo de leerling concrete handvatten te geven die diegene vanuit huis niet meekrijgt. Verder kan de leraar een houding modeleren die de leerling laat zien dat het leven niet altijd zwaar hoeft te zijn, door vrolijk en positief te zijn. Iets wat de leerling thuis minder kan ervaren, en zo een nieuwe norm meegeeft.

REFLECTIE

Hoe denk jij dat je mogelijk al een rolmodel bent voor leerlingen? Welke normen laat jij al zien in de klas, die misschien niet voor alle leerlingen vanzelfsprekend zijn?

Veerkracht, identiteit en interactie

In gesprek met leerlingen geven zij aan dat hun huidige rolmodellen voornamelijk een mentaliteit, een manier van zijn, of een manier van omgang met een ander laten zien. Dit is tijdens onderzoek voor het ontwikkelen van deze tool vertaald naar drie pijlers waaraan een rolmodel kan voldoen om behulpzaam te zijn voor jongerenwelzijn: veerkracht, identiteit, en interactie. Veerkracht gaat over het omgaan met tegenslagen, stress en zorgen. Hier komt dus een stukje kwetsbaarheid bij kijken. Identiteit gaat over laten zien wie je bent, om zo een ander te laten zien hoe diegene kan zijn. Interactie gaat over normen en mogelijke manieren van omgang met elkaar, wat in verband staat met de band met en tussen leerlingen. Als een leraar een van deze pijlers laat zien, kan dat bevorderlijk zijn voor het welzijn van leerlingen.

REFLECTIE

Laat jij wel eens zien hoe je omgaat met tegenslagen, stress of zorgen (veerkracht)? Welke unieke eigenschappen kunnen leerlingen mogelijk van jou overnemen (identiteit)? En welke omgangsnormen hanteer jij in het klaslokaal (interactie)?

Meerdere rolmodellen

Jongeren hebben niet één, maar meerdere rolmodellen, en wie dit zijn hangt af van hun eigen persoonlijkheid, hun doelen en aspiraties, en van dat van het rolmodel (The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 2017; Morgenroth et al., 2015). Of een leraar een rolmodel is, verschilt dus ook per persoon en per leerling. Daarom is het gunstig als verschillende leraren hun verschillende manieren van veerkracht, identiteit of interactie laten zien, om zoveel mogelijk leerlingen aan te spreken. Immers zijn we allemaal anders, en dat is ook de kracht van verschillende rolmodellen in je omgeving: iedereen laat weer iets anders zien.

Wegen naar Welzijn

Om leraren te begeleiden in het zijn van een rolmodel voor welzijn van leerlingen, is Wegen naar Welzijn ontwikkeld. Gefeliciteerd, dit is precies wat jij nu vast hebt! De aanleiding en theorie begrijpen is al de eerste stap naar het intentioneel en expliciet zijn van een rolmodel voor leerlingen.

Je hebt samen met een andere leraar deze instructie ontvangen, en is er een overkoepelend thema als ‘bestemming’ gekozen. Dit thema valt onder een van de pijlers: veerkracht, identiteit of interactie. Door mee te doen ga je een stukje hierover delen met leerlingen, om zo wellicht voor sommige een rolmodel te kunnen zijn. Jullie hebben als het goed is de mentorlessen ingepland om de inzichten met leerlingen te bespreken (zo niet, doe dat dan als eerst). Dan is het nu tijd om aan de slag te gaan!

CHECKLIST

- ☑ *Bestemming gekozen?*
- ☑ *Mentorlessen ingepland?*

LET’S GO!

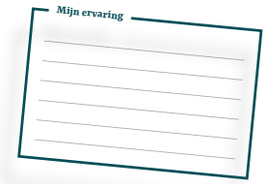
INSTRUCTIE DEEL I
Individueel

Het eerste deel gebeurt individueel. Je doorloopt de volgende stappen:

1. Start met het lezen van de aanleiding en theorie. Al gedaan? Top!

2. De opdracht is om na te denken over een moment in jouw leven dat je met dit thema te maken hebt gehad en hierop te reflecteren. Gebruik hiervoor het bijgeleverde reflectieformulier. Dit vul je in voor jezelf.

3. Vervolgens omschrijf je de gebeurtenis of situatie netjes en leesbaar op de kaart 'mijn ervaring'. Dit zal later worden tentoongesteld aan leerlingen. Zorg dat je op deze kaart alleen omschrijft wat er gebeurde, en op welk moment.



4. Wat je van de gebeurtenis of ervaring hebt geleerd, omschrijf je vervolgens netjes en leesbaar op de kaart 'Wat ik ervan leerde'. Hier schrijf je op wie of wat jou heeft geholpen om dichter bij de bestemming te komen in dat moment, of wanneer je nu nog eens iets soortgelijks meemaakt.



5. Zoek nu een artefact wat past bij jouw ervaring/ omschrijving, als visuele weergave van jouw emotie of ervaring. Kies iets wat past bij jou als persoon. Het mag van alles zijn, denk aan: een foto, een krantenartikel, een stuk textiel, een geprinte tekst van een muziekstuk, een gedicht, een pagina uit een tijdschrift. De enige eis is dat het ongeveer binnen de afmetingen van een halve A4 moet passen (+/- 21 x 15 cm), en met een punaise aan een prikbord gepind moet kunnen worden.



INSTRUCTIE DEEL II
Samen met de andere leraar

Geweldig dat je het eerste deel hebt voltooid! Wellicht heb je al een inzicht gekregen door de bewustwording van hoe jij een rolmodel kunt zijn. In het tweede deel bereid je samen met een andere docent de mentorles voor waarin jullie je beide inzichten zullen bespreken met leerlingen. Hierdoor hebben de leerlingen meerdere perspectieven op het onderwerp.

1. Bespreek jullie inzichten eerst samen en pas aan indien nodig of gewenst.

2. Plaats het thema, de inzichtkaarten en jullie artefact op de juiste manier op het prikbord. De indeling is weergegeven op de volgende pagina.

3. Bespreek jullie aanpak voor de les. De aanbevolen opzet van de les is op pagina 11 weergegeven.

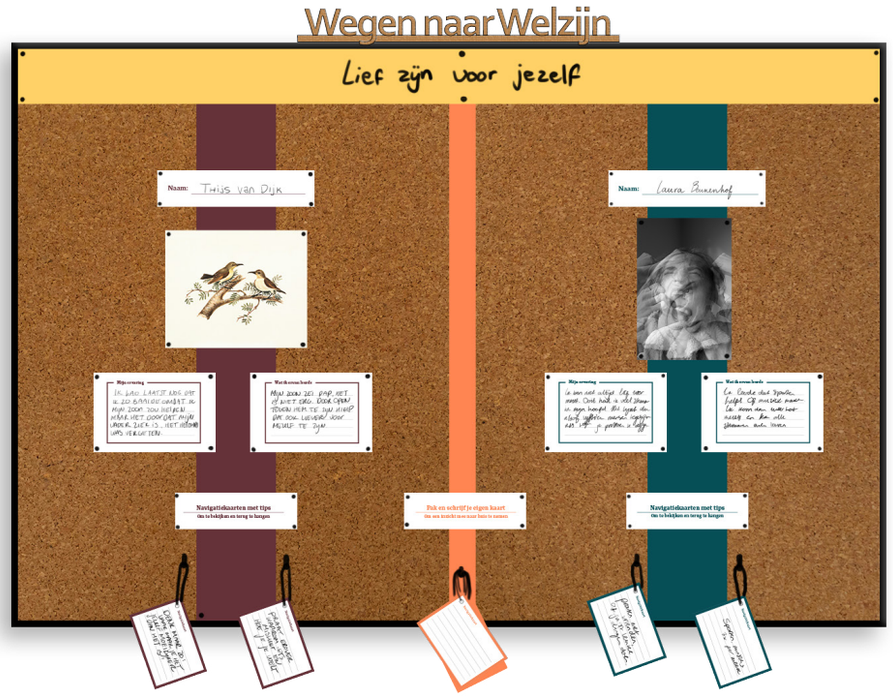
4. Schrijf samen minstens vijf verschillende navigatiekaarten op de bijgeleverde templates. De kaarten bevatten concrete tips voor leerlingen om tot de bestemming te komen. Dit kunnen tips zijn die jou als docent ook helpen of hebben geholpen, of dingen die je een ander zou aanbevelen. Je kunt ze samen of individueel schrijven, maar zorg dat er in ieder geval vijf verschillende tips op staan.



5. Hang de navigatiekaarten op op de juiste plek (zie indeling volgende pagina).

Fantastisch! Nu is het tijd voor de les met de leerlingen, om met hen het gesprek over dit onderwerp te kunnen openen. Succes, het zal vast bijzondere gesprekken teweegbrengen!

INDELING VAN DE EXPOSITIE



NA DE LES

Na de les kiezen jij en de andere leraar of jullie je inzichten en navigatiekaarten nog willen laten hangen voor een bepaalde tijd, of dit direct weghalen. De tool box met templates en deze instructie kun je nu in elk geval teruggeven aan de verantwoordelijke van de school. Zo wordt het stokje weer doorgegeven aan het volgende duo.

Mogelijke OPZET VAN DE MENTORLES

Het is belangrijk dat elke docent de les geeft zoals diegene dat fijn vindt. Daarom is dit een voorstel, als mogelijke houvast. Het is helemaal aan de leraren of ze het op deze, of een andere manier willen insteken.

1 Introduceer de bestemming (5 min)
De les begint met het introduceren van de bestemming. Waar gaat de les over, en waar hebben jullie als leraren op gereflecteerd?

2 Deel eigen ervaringen (10 min)
Vervolgens presenteren jullie om beurten de expositie. Welke situaties hebben jullie omschreven, en welke artefacten hebben jullie hierbij gekozen? Wat is jouw inzicht geweest?

3 Laat leerlingen reflecteren (20 min)
De leerlingen krijgen nu zelf de tijd om te reflecteren, en gebruiken hiervoor de associatie kaarten die zijn meegeleverd. Ze denken na of er een moment in hun eigen leven of het leven van iemand die ze kennen is geweest, waarbij ze met de bestemming te maken kregen.

4 Navigatiekaarten bespreken (5 min)
Vervolgens mogen vier leerlingen naar voren komen om de navigatiekaarten voor te lezen. De leraar mag dit ook zelf doen. De leraar vraagt de leerlingen of zij zelf ook aan deze tips hebben gedacht tijdens de reflectieopdracht.

5 Leerlingen schrijven hun eigen kaart (10 min)
Leerlingen pakken nu allemaal een lege kaart. De oranje kaarten zijn voor de leerlingen om zelf een inzicht op te schrijven en mee naar huis te kunnen nemen. Op de achterkant kan de leerling de bestemming invullen, zodat de leerling kan onthouden over welk thema de les ging. Het inzicht kan hetgeen zijn dat de docent heeft opgeschreven, of een ander inzicht. Het moet voor henzelf nuttig zijn en aanspreken.

RUIMTE VOOR TIPS AAN COLLEGA DOCENTEN

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ATT. 19: Reflection form

REFLECTION FORM

This form is intended to help you think about the ways in which you can be a role model. The questions are for yourself and do not need to be shared. You answer them to familiarise yourself with the subject and to gain insight into your experiences with the destination, which you can then pass on to a pupil.

The destination: _____

A role model can be a source of inspiration, demonstrate that something is possible, or model certain behaviour.*



1. **What can you show about the destination that will inspire the pupil to adopt a new goal, a new desire, or a new standard?**



2. **What can you show that will demonstrate to a pupil that the destination is possible to reach?**



3. **What behaviour do you consider important and what is the standard for you to feel good? Which of these can pupils unconsciously adopt?**

4. **What behaviour do you consciously believe contributes to reaching the destination? Is that something you can show students?**

Students indicate that their role models demonstrate mentality, identity, and interaction. When it comes to well-being, resilience appears to be very important. Students can also learn from your mentality, resilience, identity, or interaction and adopt things. This contributes to how students feel at school and how they see themselves.



5. **What mindset do you have when it comes to strengthening resilience? What makes your way of thinking helpful for your own resilience?**

6. **Do you ever share anything about this with pupils? What could you possibly share?**



7. **What parts of who you are do you show at school? What do pupils learn from this that some of them miss in their environment outside school?**



8. **What ways of interacting do you consider important in the classroom? How do you set a standard for how to treat each other? How does this contribute to the atmosphere at school?**

9. **How do the above questions relate to the destination for you? Are there things that are directly related to this that you already convey in your daily classroom activities?**

*According to: Morgenroth, T., Ryan, M. K., & Peters, K. (2015). The Motivational Theory of Role Modeling: How role models influence role aspirants' goals. Review of General Psychology, 19(4), 465–483. https://doi.org/10.1037/gpr0000059

REFLECTIE FORMULIER

Dit formulier is bedoeld om na te denken over de manieren hoe jij een rolmodel kunt zijn. De vragen zijn voor jezelf, en hoeven niet gedeeld te worden. Je beantwoordt ze om kennis te maken met het onderwerp, en om een inzicht te krijgen in jouw ervaringen met de bestemming, hetgeen jij weer zou kunnen doorgeven aan een leerling.

De bestemming: _____

Een rolmodel kan een inspiratie vormen, laten zien dat iets mogelijk is, of bepaald gedrag modeleren.*



1. **Wat kan jij laten zien over de bestemming, wat de leerling inspireren tot het aannemen van een nieuw doel, nieuwe wens, of nieuwe norm?**



2. **Wat kan jij laten zien, wat voor een leerling kan weergeven dat de bestemming mogelijk is om te bereiken?**



3. **Welk gedrag vind jij belangrijk en is voor jou de norm om je goed te voelen? Wat hiervan kunnen leerlingen onbewust overnemen?**

4. **Welk gedag draagt voor jou heel bewust bij aan het komen tot de bestemming? Is dat iets wat je aan leerlingen kunt laten zien?**

Leerlingen geven aan dat hun rolmodellen mentaliteit, identiteit en interactie laten zien. Als het gaat over welzijn, blijkt veerkracht heel belangrijk. Leerlingen kunnen ook van jouw mentaliteit, veerkracht, identiteit of interactie leren en dingen overnemen. Dit draagt bij aan hoe leerlingen zich voelen op school, en hoe zij zichzelf zien.



5. **Welke mentaliteit als het gaat om het versterken van veerkracht, heb jij? Wat maakt jou manier van denken behulpzaam voor je eigen veerkracht?**

6. **Deel je hier wel eens iets over met leerlingen? Wat zou je mogelijk kunnen delen?**



7. **Welke delen van wie jij bent, laat je zien op school? Wat leren leerlingen daarvan, wat sommige in hun omgeving buiten school missen?**

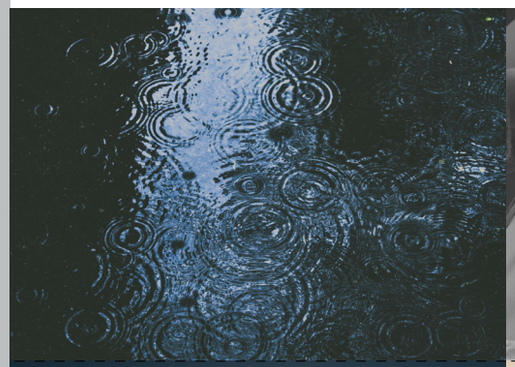


8. **Welke manieren van interactie vind jij belangrijk in de klas? Hoe laat jij een norm zien hoe je met elkaar omgaat? Hoe draagt dit vervolgens bij aan de sfeer tijdens de les en op school?**

9. **Hoe staan de bovenstaande vragen voor jou in connectie tot de bestemming? Zijn er dingen die hier direct mee te maken hebben, die je in het dagelijkse van de klas al overbrengt?**

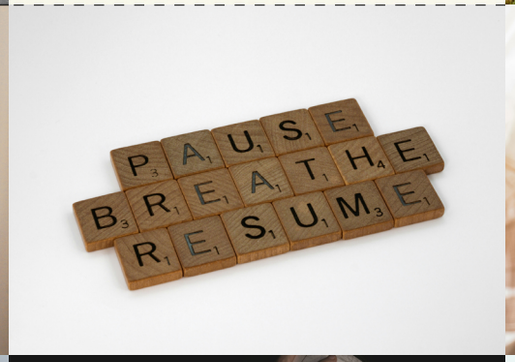
*Volgens: Morgenroth, T., Ryan, M. K., & Peters, K. (2015). The Motivational Theory of Role Modeling: How role models influence role aspirants' goals. Review of General Psychology, 19(4), 465–483. https://doi.org/10.1037/gpr0000059

ATT. 20: Provided example artifacts







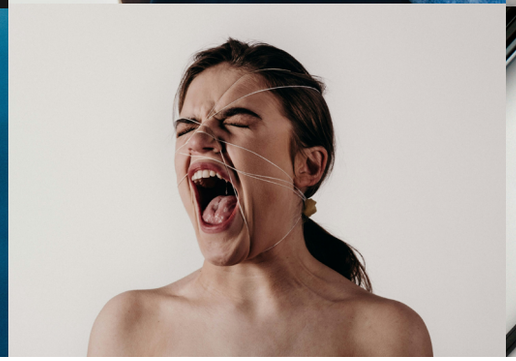
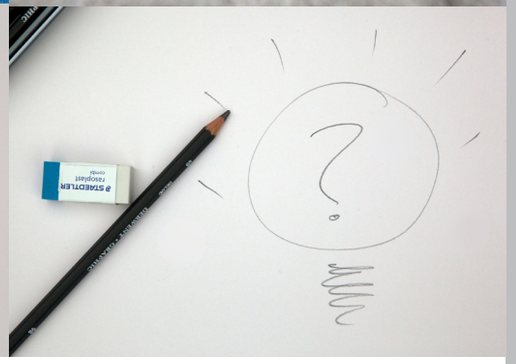




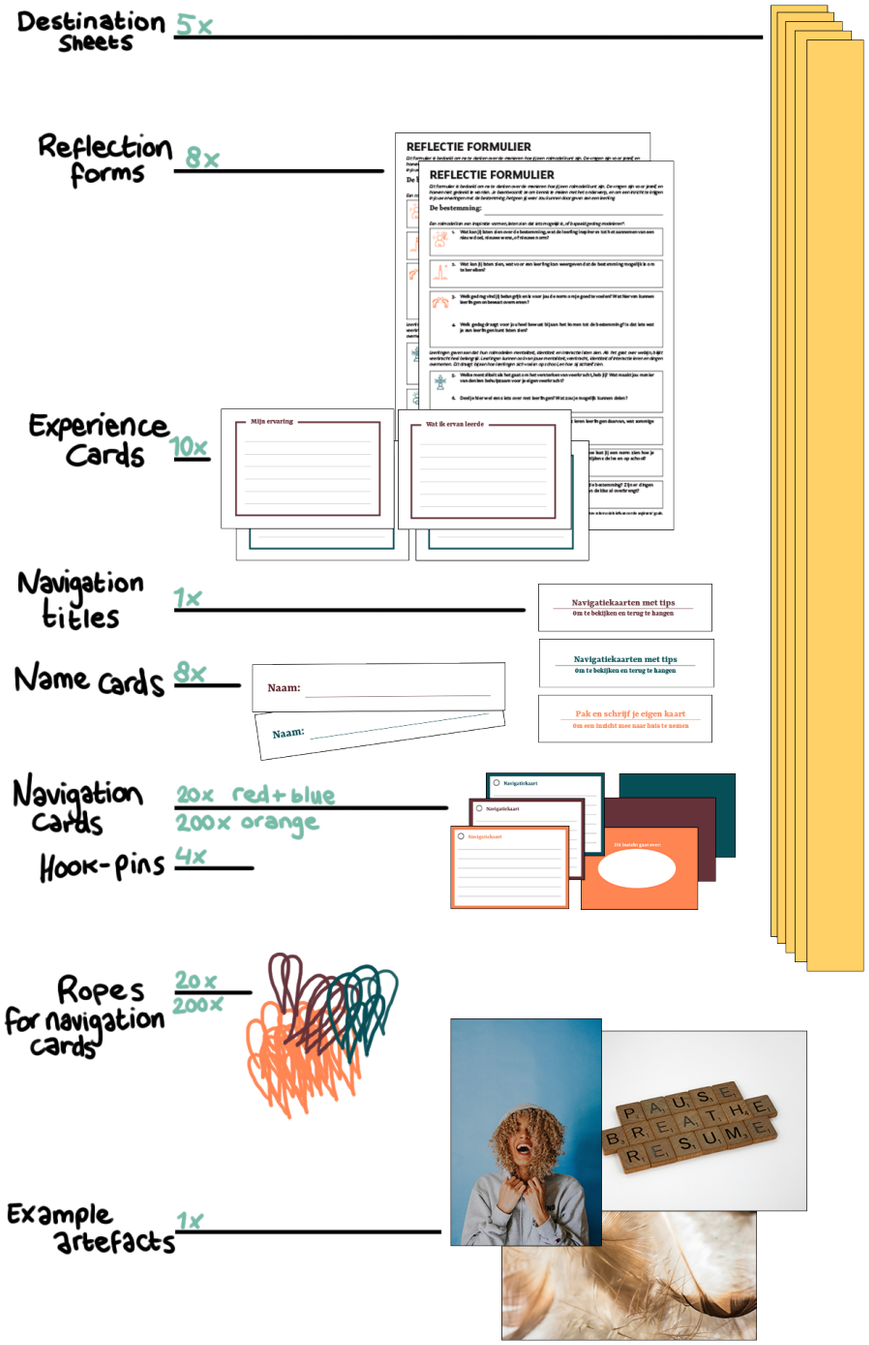






ATT. 21: Refill of Ways to Well-being



ATT. 22: Templates for printing Ways to Well-being

Navigatiekaarten met tips
Om te bekijken en terug te hangen

Pak en schrijf je eigen kaart
Om een inzicht mee naar huis te nemen

Navigatiekaarten met tips
Om te bekijken en terug te hangen

Pak en schrijf je eigen kaart
Om een inzicht mee naar huis te nemen

Navigatiekaarten met tips
Om te bekijken en terug te hangen

Navigatiekaarten met tips
Om te bekijken en terug te hangen

Navigatiekaarten met tips
Om te bekijken en terug te hangen

Navigatiekaarten met tips
Om te bekijken en terug te hangen

Pak en schrijf je eigen kaart
Om een inzicht mee naar huis te nemen

Pak en schrijf je eigen kaart
Om een inzicht mee naar huis te nemen

Mijn ervaring

Wat ik ervan leerde

Mijn ervaring

Wat ik ervan leerde

Navigatiekaart

Navigatiekaart

Navigatiekaart

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Dit inzicht gaat over:

Dit inzicht gaat over:

Naam: _____

Naam: _____

Naam: _____

Naam: _____

Naam: _____

Naam: _____

Naam: _____

XXX

Wegen naar welzijn: docenten over zelfliefde

Naam: _____



Mijn ervaring

Een tijdje geleden voelde ik mij vaak somber. Ik had geen zin om dingen te ondernemen of met mensen af te spreken. Ik vond het moeilijk om dit met anderen te delen. Ik vond dat ik het zelf moest doen.

Wat ik ervan leerde

Door mijn gevoelens met een goede vriend te delen, heb ik uiteindelijk de stap gezet om naar de huisarts te gaan. Zij heeft mij in contact gebracht met een fijne coach. Ik hoef het eigenlijk helemaal niet alleen te doen.

Navigatiekaarten met tips

Om te bekijken en terug te hangen

Pak en schrijf je eigen kaart

Om een inzicht mee naar huis te nemen

Naam: _____



Mijn ervaring

Na het overlijden van mijn moeder was ik erg bezig met voor anderen zorgen. Mijn eigen rauw en pijn mocht er niet zijn. Het koste de hulp van vrienden en een therapeut om my te dwingen ook voor mezelf te zorgen.

Wat ik ervan leerde

Ik heb geleerd dat het oke is om pijn en verdriet te voelen en te leunen op anderen. Ook mijn gevoelens mogen er zijn. En als je om hulp vraagt helpen mensen vaak graag. Ook geleerd dat mensen sterker zijn als ze emoties voelen inplaats van weg stoppen.

Navigatiekaarten met tips

Om te bekijken en terug te hangen