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Perspectives for unfolding well-being in the context of teacher education: Emerging wellbeing Insights from Theoretical Austrian Traditions

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Abstract

This article focuses on teacher education and aims to gain new and different insights into teacher education with reference to wellbeing. The Austrian contribution initially introduces the project team and the understanding of well-being from a specific tradition, which has particularly evolved through the project over time. It highlights the importance of well-being and the diversity of its interpretations, aiming to link this approach with several Austrian traditions of thought. It also seems theoretically not insignificant how the word 'wellbeing' or 'wellbeing' is spelt. To emphasize the connection to teacher education, the concept of well-being is associated with the Didactic Triangle of Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841) and interwoven across and through Austrian traditions of thinking. Some exemplary excerpts from focus groups illustrate the theoretical considerations presented in this paper. The article suggests that future research should particularly contemplate the directedness of one's exegesis - because when considering Austrian traditions of thought, a careful unpacking of the meaning is required. Particularly in the application of the idea and concept in relation to teacher education.

1 Introduction

The Erasmus+ Project and the Austrian Teaching to Be Team

The EU-funded Erasmus+ project Teaching to Be: supporting teachers' professional growth and well-being (T2B) was conducted from 2021 to 2024 by eight partner institutions in Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Austria, and Slovenia. The aim was to develop an online wellbeing course (OWC) for school development and the promotion of the professional wellbeing of teachers, based on insights from all participating partner countries. The project's objective was to empower teachers by improving their social, prosocial, and emotional competencies, preventing burnout, and promoting the school as a central hub for the social, prosocial and emotional development of students.

The project team in Austria consisted of a collaboration of academic employees from the *Karl Landsteiner Private University of Health Sciences* (KL) in Krems, Research Center for Transitional Psychiatry, led by Professor Beate Schrank and with the participation of Sylvia Dörfler, and the *University College of Teacher Education in Lower Austria* (PH NÖ) in Baden as associated partner, Department of Diversity, led by Professor Kerstin Angelika Zechner and with the participation of Professor Christian Wiesner.

Both institutions, forming the T2B-Team in Austria, worked in collaboration with teachers to research strategies that counteract stress factors and contribute to the enhancement of wellbeing through the process of professionalizing teachers. During the development phase, a Qualitative Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach was conducted, utilizing *focus group* discussions, qualitative interviews, and feedback sessions for the content development of the course. The data utilized for the in-depth insights presented in this paper were collected through *focus groups* in five Austrian schools, each comprised of fifteen teachers. These focus group sessions were conducted between October 2021 and April 2022 during school meetings. The primary themes and inquiries related to professional well-being were established by the EU team and structured into a semi-structured questionnaire. Each focus group discussion had an approximate duration of 90 minutes. Participants were informed about the group's objectives and the session's procedures. At the start of each session, their consent was sought for recording the meeting for subsequent transcription. Moderators posed questions from the semi-structured questionnaire and further delved into specific topics with follow-up inquiries. This article will reference only a few statements from these discussions; however, the reflections are grounded in the prevalent themes and structures that emerged. This article focuses on teacher education and aims to gain new and different insights into teacher education with reference to well-being. Therefore, the team from the University College of Teacher Education Lower Austria (PH NÖ) takes responsibility for the further thoughts presented in this article.

The concept involves leveraging *educational development* also as a strategy to sustainably enhance long-term *teaching quality* and facilitate continuous *school improvement*. We will delve deeper into *teaching enhancement* and, in doing so, explore *school development*, highlighting the need to closely observe the *dynamic* and *evolving* aspects embodied in the term *well-being*.

Exploring well-Being through the concept of literacies

The paper focuses on future-oriented research directions, both conceptually and theoretically, to highlight *well-being* as a crucial component of future literacies. The concepts of (health or/and well-being) *literacy education* and *being literate* are deeply embedded within social and prosocial contexts, characterized by their significant value, complexity, and an inherent emancipatory nature (Bèlanger, 1994). Echoing Street's perspective from 1994, it's crucial to acknowledge the existence of multiple *literacies*, which extend beyond mere collections of competencies or basic Literacy (Wiesner & Prieler, 2023). It's important to understand that the concept of a singular or basic *Literacy*, represented with a capital 'L' and a single 'y', is just one perspective. A more open-minded approach is needed – especially to understand such a *complex* construct as *well-being* – a construct that is composed of *multiple literacies*.

Therefore, comprehending well-being in its entirety involves understanding the broader concept of *being literary*, which is feasible only by acknowledging the diversity and literacies. The idea of a literate mind demands a profound reconsideration of our cognitive perception of well-being, which involves being literate (Wiesner & Prieler, 2023). However, in this context, being literary implies addressing well-being from a literary viewpoint, not just from a literate standpoint (Livingstone et al., 2008). In this paper, the term is spelled with a hyphen, so it's referred to as well-being. Being literate and being literary differ also in terms of measurability, where either *competencies* or *literacies* are emphasized. To grasp the concept of *literacies*, one must consider *overlay phenomena* like the Moiré effect, familiar from gestalt perception [Gestaltwahrnehmung]. Minor shifts can lead to substantial alterations in structure and can result in significant structural transformations (as illustrated in Figure 1), a concept detailed by Wiesner, (2024), Wiesner & Prieler (2023), Wiesner & Schreiner (2023), and Wiesner & Zechner (2023), in their studies on *literacies* [Vermögen], overlay effects [Überlagerungsmuster], and *ambiguous figures* [Kippbilder] in the context of Gestalt theory.

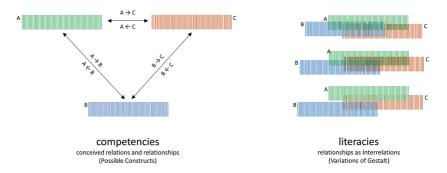


Figure 1: The Distinction between the Concept of Competencies and literacies (in reference to Wiesner & Brandhofer, 2024; self-drawn)

The further considerations in this paper will open this perspective and attempt to show how new, different paths for a deeper understanding based on the findings from the current project can become possible in the future. In the following paper, some specific German terms are used, which contain a certain nuance in the German language that may be lost in the English translation. Therefore, the respective essential German terms within the article will be presented in square brackets, similar to the use of insertions in quotations.

2 Understanding the Importance of various Modes of Well-Being

Well-being as a state of being what?

A significant aspect of *wellbeing* or *well-being* is commonly referred to as *pro-fessional well-being*. But what exactly does this term or idea mean? And how is the idea and the concept also expressed in writing through theoretical references? It's important to note that there isn't a singular, universally accepted theoretical concept of well-being or wellbeing. Instead, it likely encompasses various aspects and foundations, especially when considering well-being or wellbeing in relation to the educational work environment and to the world. To facilitate reading, in relation to the upcoming theoretical references, we now choose the spelling of *well-being* (even though the project itself preferred the spelling *wellbeing*).

Initially, there's an approach to *well-being* (or Well-Being, Well-being, Wellbeing, wellbeing) and *Mental Health Literacy* closely associated with mental illness, as seen in Marinucci's works, among others (Marinucci et al., 2018, 2022, 2023). It's crucial to recognize the risk of oversimplification inherent in a mere *literacy-based*, *informational perspective* on mental health or well-being. Instead, the concept of

mental health and/or well-being should be broadly expanded to include formative, prosocial, societal, and cultural dimensions, aligning with the broader concept of *literacies*. The concept of using *Literacy* or *Competence* instead of *literacies* tends to lead to simplified views about a highly complex subject area, resulting in hasty definitions rather than clarifying descriptions of phenomena. Alternative approaches include Brann's perspective on *mental health education* as *self-efficacy* and *teacher training* (Brann et al., 2022) and Byrne's *well-being approach* (Byrne et al., 2022b, 2022a). In these discussions, it's easy to overlook that *multiple aspects are involved simultaneously*, especially the significance of *intentionality* and the comprehension of *literacies* (as depicted in Figure 1).

Even today, there is *no* concrete understanding of health; it's often more about the absence of illness than a clear definition or clarifying description of health. In German, when someone feels unwell, they might say *Es fehlt mir etwas* and *Mir geht es nicht gut*, which literally translates to *I am lacking something*. A healthy person engages in a wide range of activities, suggesting that health is essentially synonymous with well-being. As the German philosopher Gadamer (2004, p. 73) eloquently described *health as well-being*, defining it as a "condition of not noticing, of being unhindered, and of being ready for and open to everything," weaving this sort of definition into a *complex network of thoughts*. In Plato's *Phaedrus*, it is argued that the *body* [Körper] cannot be treated without simultaneously addressing the *soul* and *Leiblichkeit*, suggesting a holistic approach to being that goes beyond mere embodiment (Whitehead, 2019). *Leib*(lichkeit) refers to the *lived body*, the way we humans experience and relate to the world, including our interactions with it. Self-expression is possible only through the Leib, as it is the lived and vital body that enables us *to experience well-being through intentionality*.

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines well-being somewhat imprecisely as the condition of *being healthy*, and *happy* (Hornby, 1995). Etymologically, the Old English words 'beon', 'beom', and 'bion'are similar to the Greek term 'phu-', meaning to become, exist, or come into being. This is similar to the Old Irish 'bi'u' and the Lithuanian 'būti', which translate to to be or I am. Additionally, the word *well* in Old English has connotations that extend beyond "good," encompassing meanings like "very much, better," and implies being "in good fortune, happy", or 'in good health, not ailing' (Wedgwood, 1872; Hoad, 1996). It is being as a prerequisite for, and a central component of, well-being. Byrne's writing (2022a, p. 664) highlights the elusive nature of defining *well-being*, noting, "well-being, in its broadest sense, can be conceptualized as a sense of contentment with one's mental, emotional, and physical state." On the other hand, Watson et al. (2012, p. 25) describe well-being as a construct "that is fluid in nature and possesses an evolving, context-dependent definition." In a very narrow definition, well-being, particularly its emotional aspect, refers to "happiness, confidence and not feeling depressed" (p. 1). But well-being seems to encompass a broader scope than just the binary opposite of being unwell. Therefore, *well-being* can be seen as a term for integrated, *meaningful* lives. As Whitehead (2019, p. 42) posits, "existentially, health is experienced as well-being." This concept should not be interpreted as simply feeling good or not feeling depressed, but rather as experiencing *various modes of existence in a proficient way* – as experiencing well-being. And as Gasper (2004), p. 7) puts it: "wellbeing thus has diverse aspects. Rather than set up a precisely delimited, narrow single notion of *well-being*, and then try to police its 'correct' usage, we will do better to see wellbeing as an umbrella notion." Our stance aligns with the core principles of the T2B project, which emphasizes supporting teachers' professional growth. This approach prioritizes the *professionalization* of educators, placing it at the forefront of the discussion.

3 The Austrian Perspective to develop Insights

Some theoretical traditions from Austria

Foremost, it is imperative to underscore reflections on a *unique Austrian scientific tradition* that not only underpins this contribution but also seamlessly integrates the understanding of well-being and psychosocial competencies into the broader context of *being-in-relations*. To underscore Brentano's concept of *intentionality* (1874), the term *well-being* is written with a hyphen, especially in the context of Austrian philosophical tradition. This hyphenation is indicative of an approach that deeply appreciates the *nuanced meanings* and the intricate relationship between the components of *well* and *being*.

We delve into the concept of a distinct and specific Austrian educational philosophy, particularly within the realms of philosophy of psychology and philosophy of pedagogy. These intellectual traditions trace their roots back to Franz Brentano (1838–1917), who mentored and provided ideas (along with stimulations for their interpretation) to Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), Anton Marty (1847–1914), Christian von Ehrenfels (1859-1932), Carl Stumpf (1848-1936), and Alexius Meinong (1853–1920), as well as, in the long run, to Karl Bühler (1879–1963). Egon Brunswik (1903-1955) and Sir Karl Raimund Popper (1902-1994), who earned their doctorates under Bühler, furthered this distinctive Austrian approach through the so-called Denkstudien (thinking studies; Bühler, 1907, 1908a, 1908b), facilitating scientific analyses and syntheses (Wiesner, 2022a; Wiesner & Schreiner, 2023). This method was also applied by *Charlotte Bühler* (1893–1974) in child and youth research, emphasizing intentions and relationships. From this perspective, teaching is scientifically intertwined with both social science and the humanities. Without Brentano, Phenomenological Science and the Vienna School of Gestalt Perception [Wiener Schule der Gestaltwahrnehmung] would be inconceivable, as he is the scholarly father of Husserl and the theoretical grandfather of

Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) and *Max Scheler* (1874–1928) and neither would the *Consistent Empiricism* of *Moritz Schlick* (1882–1936) prevail.

Brentano's approach is notable for highlighting the phenomenon of the "intentionality (or the character of "referring to something [or somebody]")" (Brentano, 1874, p. 306), encompassing actions like >I teach(, >I demonstrate(, >I explain(, and J empathizes. From a phenomenological perspective, wellbeing is the impression of feeling comfortable and can be described as "being in a state of wellness or health," always in a dynamic relationship with something or someone. The concept of intentionality [Intentionalität], first introduced by Brentano, combines in a unique way a *cognitive* with a *conative* aspect, as noted by Charlotte Bühler (1971, p. 380): "Intentionality implies both a person's focusing on a subject which means or signifies something to him as well as a person's directing himself toward this subject." According to Brentano, to impart any meaningful guidance, it is crucial to delineate the focus in those situations and experiences. Intentionality entails an arising [Auftauchen], a connecting [Sich-Verbinden], and a fading away [Verschwinden] in *real experiences* rooted in imaginations and concepts [Vorstellungen], judgments [Urteile], and emotional phenomena such as acts of will, sensations and feelings [Willensakte, Empfindungen, Emotionen und Gefühle]. All the aspects listed thus also indicate that we are dealing with *literacies*, meaning an *interplay* and *coexistence* of most diverse moments and abilities. In this sense, Brentano doesn't propose colours, tones, or conversations, but rather envisions people *perceiving colours*, *hearing* tones, and engaging in speech – which means being-in-relatives [In-Relative-Sein], signifying an engagement or response to somebody or something. In this regard *all* "mental events do not occur in a vacuum [especially in the context of phenomenology and gestalt perception of Bühler]; they are lived by someone" (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008, p. 19). Phenomenology is notably "anchored to the careful description, analysis, and interpretation of lived experience" (Thompson, 2007, p. 16) focusing on "how thinking, perceiving, acting, and feeling are experienced in one's own case." The understanding of well-being is based on the ability to comprehend intentionality. Intentionality should not be mistaken for merely pursuing a purpose; it involves adopting a *specific direction*, following an aspiration, and possessing a clear sense of orientation. Intentionality means a respectively specific quality of directedness [Gerichtetheit]. In both perception and teaching, one engages in a state of understanding and relating to something, a process from which the phenomenon of well-being also naturally develops.

From the perspectives of both the history of science and scholarly work, it's also recorded that *Sigmund Freud* (1856–1939) studied under Brentano at the University of Vienna, where he attended a lecture series on philosophical texts (Schwediauer, 2005). It was during this period that the concept of *metapsychology* began to take shape as a *dynamic process*, characterized by interplaying forces and inherent conflicts. Specifically, Freud incorporated theoretical ideas from Bren-

tano (1874, p. 8), such as "every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages referred to as the *intentional* (or mental) inexistence of an object, or, in more modern terms, the reference to a content, the direction toward an object." Furthermore, Brentano suggested (1874), "in presentation, something is presented; in judgment, something is affirmed or denied; in love, something is loved; in hate, hated; in desire, desired, and so forth." Freud developed his approach and idea of metapsychology out of Brentano's activity, *descriptive*, and *relational* science. *Metapsychology*, in the words of Freud (1936, p. 83), is "a mode of observation in which every mental process is evaluated according to the three coordinates of *dynamics*, *topology*, and *economics*," from which, as a theoretical and *analytical* "application," the division 'into an ego, an id, and a super-ego' emerged.

Beyond Freud's psychoanalysis, the realm of psychotherapeutic schools in Vienna is further enriched by Alfred Adler's (1870–1937) Individual Psychology and Viktor Emil Frankl's (1905-1997) Logotherapy and Existential Analysis, epitomizing the second and third waves of Viennese psychotherapeutic schools. All three theoretical ideas are based on variations of Brentano's concept of *intentionality*. It is particularly evident in the early works of Frankl (1938) that psychoanalysis pursues the personal *awareness* of repressions [Bewusstwerden von Verdrängung], and individual psychology - which should actually be called personality analysis particularly emphasizes personal responsibility [Verantwortlich-Sein] and community feeling [Gemeinschaftsgefühl]. According to Frankl (1938), from the first two Viennese schools of psychotherapy emerges the formula: Being oneself (or being me) is being conscious [Bewusstwerdung] and being personal responsible [Ver-Antwortbarkeit] in relation to a community [Gemeinschaft], thereby addressing essential types of intentionality that are opposing and complementary. This leads to possible goals of action: *adaptation* from the psychoanalytic tradition and the *shap*ing of reality through the individual-analytic perspective. Frankl (1938) adds the intention of *finding meaning* [Sinnfindung], which always simultaneously requires a focus on *finding values* [Wertfindung] and embraces any discussion on an ideological basis (Wiesner, 2020): Logotherapy entails integrating ideological discourse into one's own thoughts and feelings, allowing for an *existential analysis* [Dasein] to understand the recognition of *responsibility* as a fundamental aspect of human existence. This, in turn, fosters personal awareness, transcending repression and enabling the establishment of one's *being-in-relationship* and overall *being* [Sosein]. Meaning, as also observed by Adler in 1927, always encompasses both the concept of meaning and the corresponding act, as a specific quality of directedness toward something. Therefore, Adler (1927, p. 38) develops three essential moments of personal responsibility: "I have called the three great tasks of life - the task of building successful human relationships [Gemeinschaftsleben], that of pursuing a socially useful occupation [Arbeit], and that of intimate relationships [Liebe]."

Because all our doings and our actions regarding these three questions is the pathos and response we provide through our way of life as *lifestyle* [Lebensstil]. The three tasks are closely intertwined with each other. Within this context, you'll encounter both the notion of *literacies* and the concept of *intentionality*.

Another Austrian tradition that can be introduced into the discussion is the idea of the *impactful figure* [einprägsame Figur], as championed by *Ludwig Wittgenstein* (1889–1951). This concept opens up new spaces, dimensions, and avenues for thoughts and ideas. According to Wittgenstein (1974, S. 6), *scientific visualization* can lead to *role models* (or guiding models and new paradigms) [Vorbild], not just representations of theory [Abbild]. Instead, images and figures can give rise to new insights. Images and figures are instruments and display the results and events of processes (more than the written word; Wiesner, 2023a) – as will be evident later in this article, particularly in the context of the Didactic Triangle figure.

Examining these concepts and ideas reveals *blind spots* in healthcare and our understanding of well-being, especially in the areas of education [Erziehung] and formation [Bildung]. Such challenges necessitate an appreciation for *Integrative Existential Health Pedagogy*. This approach focuses on comprehending persons within the context of their community. Consequently, in a medical context, the terms *patient* or *client* should more aptly be interpreted as *patient person* (White-head, 2019). The term *patient* was originally meant to be an adjective, not a noun. For instance, teachers demonstrate *patience* with children. In education, a teacher exhibits *patience* not only in their own learning journey but also in guiding the learning of others. This perspective brings the enhancement and support of one-self and others to the forefront of understanding. And all people are primarily to be understood as *persons*: "Just as one cannot find two leaves of a tree that are absolutely identical, one cannot find two human beings who are absolutely alike" (Adler, 1927, p. 48).

For Bühler (1971), it revolves around four fundamental life tendencies, each displaying specific *intentionality* and *interwoven* with one another. The first one pertains to the need for personal satisfaction in *meaningful work* as well as ego recognition. The second involves a fundamental inclination towards *self-regulation* and self-limiting *adaptation*, aiming to fit in, belong, and attain security. The third centers on a basic urge for *creative expansion*, personal development, and facilitating self-expression and creative accomplishments. To these tendencies, we encounter a fourth fundamental inclination, which Bühler (1971) interpret as various attempts at *integration*. Bühler (1971, p. 382) refers to it as "order upholding." Viewed through this lens, the *concept of intentionality* – like the three Viennese schools of psychotherapy and the Viennese School of Gestalt perception – gains a special status and attains a special significance. In the Austrian paper to the T2B project, titled "Teachers' Experiences of Communication Practices with Students, Colleagues, Parents, and School Collective that Shape Their professional

Well-Being" by Dörfler et al. (manuscript in preparation), the importance of the phenomenon of intentionality is highlighted across multiple countries. This concept is succinctly captured in the phrase *I am well because I am in relationships*' or 'my well-being stems from my intentional involvement with the world, community, and relationships.

4 The Didactic Triangle and the Development of Teacher Education

One and the others and thoughts about things

To open up a different perspective, in which data can be newly and differently embedded, a model as an *impactful figure* – and similar to a *fishing net* – is necessary, providing the foundation for observation. Bühler's approach to each exploration and understanding is characterized by the tradition of Viennese gestalt perception and the concept of the 'whole and its parts' (Bühler, 1907, p. 330), where Bühler's parts [Momente] are always to be understood as (dynamic) moments *in* a gestalt, forming *together* a structure and multiple fields within a coordinate system. The relationships between the moments are not to be understood like competences, but rather in the sense of literacies that *relate to* and *interweave with* each other. As a model in the sense of a gestalt and as a foundation, Herbart's *Didactic Triangle* [Didaktisches Dreieck] is selected in the present paper for further consideration and with regard to *intentionality*.

The so-called Didactic Triangle as a conceptual figure and image, conceived by Heimann (1947, p. 69) based on Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841), is the starting and finishing point for determining different relations in teaching development (Wiesner, 2023b). Usually, only the *three poles* of the triangle are emphasized (teacher-student-topic), which foregrounds the polarization and barely acknowledges the interrelation of the poles or the phenomena of intentionality (see figure 2a). Especially drawing on the Viennese tradition of gestalt perception, it can be shown how the illustration shapes recognition as well as the respective net, and how something seemingly identical can also be completely different despite the (gestalt-)similarity (Welsch, 1987, p. 268). Essential in the form of the Didactic Triangle is the *being-in-relatives* (see figure 2b). Thus, the Didactic Triangle serves for awareness [Bewusstwerdung], makes responsibility visible [Verantwortlich-Sein] and allows a glimpse into the idea of meaning-making [Sinnfindung] in relation to teaching and forming a *community*. It is the pedagogical situation in relation to world orientation from which the well-being of the teaching person develops.

In pedagogy, which in the German-speaking context represents the science of education [Erziehung] and formation [Bildung], there is a fundamental reliance on clarifying the basic structure of teaching in this *Pedagogical Triangle*. This triangle not only reveals the comprehensiveness of the pedagogical situation but also opens up possibilities for *well-being* through the observation of respective *intentionality* in the area of educational development. Especially in "teaching, the functions of education and formation are inseparably connected" (Jannasch & Joppich, 1964, p. 12), yet they can be distinguished through a sharpened and deeper view in relation to well-being in the *event* [Geschehen] and based on the *Didactic Triangle*. Education (as *upbringing*) leads primarily to "attitudes, beliefs, and dispositions" and shapes "lifestyles" across generations based on the foundation of relationships *and* well-being. Upbringing is the quintessential relationship – and the relationship occurs between the teaching person and the others (learners).

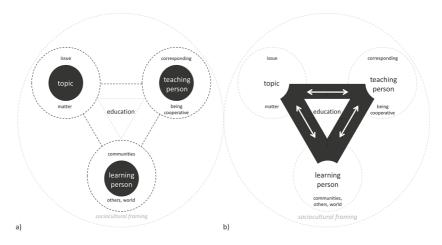


Figure 2: The Didactic Triangle as a Reversible Figure in Gestalt Perception (in reference to Wiesner & Brandhofer, 2024; self-drawn)

A source-oriented, origin-following view of the Didactic Triangle reveals that it derives from the insights of Herbart (1806, 1814). In this work, Herbart (1814, p. 200) clarifies his view: "And since the expansion of power occurs by presenting the pupils with a variety of objects [subjects and facts as content, topics, material, etc.] that stimulate and move them, something third must be placed between the educator [teaching person; mentor, etc.] and the pupil [learning person, student, mentees, etc.] as a means by which the latter is engaged by the former. Such an action is called teaching." As a reminder – the understanding of well-being is based on the ability to comprehend the respective forms of intentionality between the poles, thereby paying attention to the *in-between* and the *relationships*.

The triadic structure mentioned here as an interplay of questions and answers through expressions between persons about objects, topics and content, can already be found in Platonic Socrates in the dialogue *Gorgias* (2014), where *people converse and mutually teach and learn from each other* (Platon, 456a-457c). Also, in the dialogue *Cratylus* (1993), the triadic is highlighted in relation to Bühler (1934, p. 24), emphasizing language as an organum in the sense of a tool and (musical) instrument, 'to communicate with another about things. This "enumeration of one – to another – about things names no less than three foundational relations", writes Bühler (1934, pp. 24f.), from which a "three-foundation scheme" similar to the three poles of the Didactic Triangle emerges. This foundational triangle is also the form of modelling the relation of signs (*symptom, symbol, signal*) to each other, upon which the entire sign theory of Bühler (1932) is based, and which can also be found in a similar form in Gardiner (1932) at the same historical time.

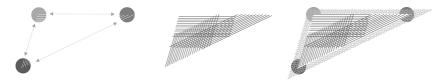


Figure 3: The Didactic Triangle as a Reversible Figure in Gestalt Perception (in reference to Wiesner & Brandhofer, 2024; self-drawn)

Already Platonic Socrates in the dialogue Cratylus by Plato (388b) poses Hermogenes the question about teaching: "Do we not teach each other something and distinguish the objects from each other, according to their nature?," thus constructing a triadic structure, which is found in the expressions and theoretical approaches of Herbart (1806, 1814) and Paul Heimann (1901–1967). Davidson (1997, p. 220) also developed in his philosophy of mind a similar 'fundamental situation' with his humanities theory of Triangulation. In this context, he described a scenario where "at least two beings interacting simultaneously with each other and with their common world," resulting in a triple interaction. Triangulation, in this context, alludes to three *different* viewpoints that not only intertwine and interconnect but also give rise to a *foreground* and *background* (refer to Figure 3). This results in a comprehensive perspective as a Gestalt, as each of the actors has multiple facets from their viewpoint: Each of the two simultaneously relates to the world, their own thoughts (and topics), and the respective other actor. Thus, each participant learns together with others (and their thoughts) and as well as from the world (our globe) according to Donald Davidson (1917-2003). From this developed particularly the aspects of thinking as well as the objectivity of thought and the content *of thoughts* about the world as forms of *world orientations*, worldviews [Weltan-schauungen], and from them, *scientific nets*. Fundamentally, Davidson thus also formulated positionalities within a coordinate system (in the triangle).

Herbart (1814, p. 201) differentiates in his "Doctrine of Education" between the "subject in which instruction is given" (p. 200; emphasis added), which is the transmission as pure or special didactics (methods) and "character formation (education)" (p. 201), as the more comprehensive or general didactics, focusing on the "human psyche" (p. 203) – concerning the *relation* between *world orientations* and *relationships*. An understanding of *well-being* from a literate viewpoint thus solely refers to the promotion of mediating competencies. Being literary entails a deeper understanding of *well-being* from an *intentional* perspective while maintaining a comprehensive view of the overall context and the interrelated elements. However, Herbart (1814, p. 202) elaborates further and more profoundly: "Above all, I demand from the educator that he orients himself most carefully in this distinction [... - in his world orientations]. Whoever does not do this may be an excellent empiricist, but in my eyes, he is not a theorist." The pedagogical (relationship) situation, according to Heimann (1947, p. 60), is based on an "interpersonal encounter," which represents a "primal phenomenon" and can lead to an "interpersonal relationship" (p. 61), particularly concerning *well-being*. Especially the word "situation [...] is in this context a very sober word for a highly complex interpersonal state, in which not only a series of intellectual processes take place but also a certain affectivity [...] is lived out" (p. 67). Therefore, Heimann (1961), p. 136) specifically emphasizes the difference between "creative work" (through technical skills and both transmitting and mediating competencies) and "life design" (through literacies, capabilities, and abilities).

Therefore, the idea of the Didactic Triangle can be found in the model of *Theme-Centered Interaction* (TCI) according to *Ruth Charlotte Cohn* (1912–2010), whereby two essential questions from the teacher to the students are to be asked (1975): "What are my possibilities and limitations and what are our possibilities and limitations." At the same time, two essential questions towards the theme and content from the teacher are: *What are my possibilities and limitations in relation to the theme (topic)* and *What is the significance and impact of the theme on me.* Both directions from the teacher are not only interesting but essential in relation to the teacher's wellbeing. Additionally, the *globe* (as circle) is added to the triangle and points to all moments and structures that are found beneath and behind the visible *Me-We-Topic Triangle*, such as values, trust, desires, taboos, and more. Once the various ideas are combined, a different understanding of the Didactic Triangle emerges, and the respective *intentionality* in relation to *well-being* becomes more apparent (see Figure 4 and the resulting implications).

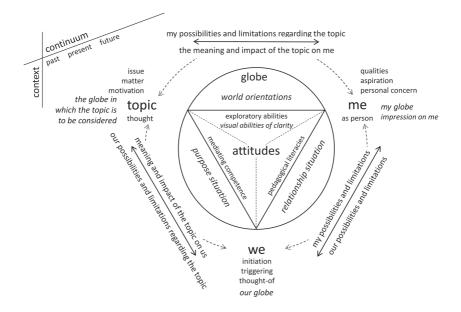


Figure 4: The Didactic Triangle as a gestalt of teaching and as an impactful figure (in reference to Wiesner & Brandhofer, 2024; self-drawn)

Learner's view and orient themselves in relation to the world *through the eyes* and senses of educators when the relationship with each other and the exploration of the world take precedence (from us to me and together to the topics of the world). However, if the focus is solely on transmission and instruction, the world is conceptually passed on to learners only through content (from the topics to us, the we-learners). Depending on one's way of thinking, this also leads to vastly different theoretical assumptions in relation to well-being. Here are some *insights* from the *focus groups* (teachers) of the T2B project in relation to what has been said theoretically so far (for more on this and other theoretical ideas, see the paper *Teachers' Experiences of Communication Practices with students, colleagues, parents,* and school collective that shape their professional well-being – currently in preparation by Dörfler et al.):

Being aware (in the Spirit of the Idea of Psychoanalysis)

We can't go back to the teacher we had 30 years ago. Our teaching profession has changed so much that we are now very much involved in teaching, caring, and nurturing, and not just in mediating knowledge. (reference: focus group 1/S5)

And if they observe from us what it's like to be empathetic and experience empathy, then perhaps they can achieve it themselves. I'm reflecting on why this is so important. But I think it simply allows for better teaching for some reason. (reference: focus group 2/S3)

Shaping a community (in the Spirit of the Idea of Individual Psychology)

As a teacher, one of the most important things is to be empathetic, because nowadays, it's essential to be able to put oneself in the students' shoes. Especially today, it's important to empathize with others. We expect children to be empathetic as well. Then, we must be able to demonstrate this ourselves. (reference: focus group 2/S5)

I think one of the most important things is to build a relationship with the learners, because then you can reach them more easily and understand them much better. (reference: focus group 3/S4)

Being responsible (in the Spirit of the Idea of Individual Psychology, Logotherapy, and Existential Analysis)

I believe that we also have a responsibility to combine our intellect and character. And as Frankl says: 'Under the hammer blows of fate and in the white heat of life, character is formed,' and we are somehow also called upon to prove this. (reference: focus group 1/S5)

You need to empathize with learners. It's not about just doing your own thing regardless of the consequences. You also have to resolve conflicts. (reference: focus group 3/S2)

Finding meaning (in the Spirit of the Idea of Logotherapy and Existential Analysis)

Feeling the efficacy is more important than mere perspectives, because I believe that sensing this efficacy is something essential for the profession. I think there are two things. One is the joy of doing [...], and the other is being able to realize one's visions of life. (reference: focus group 3/S5)

This means that I have to love my job, in a sense, what I do. It has to have a meaning. Love fits in here because then I am a balanced person, having a worldview and inner peace. (reference: focus group 3/S5)

Returning to all the ideas previously introduced, the distinctively Austrian perspective, incorporating *intentionality* and emphasizing *awareness*, *responsibility*, *community*, and *meaning-making* within a Platonic framework (as *literacies*) represented by the Didactic Triangle in Herbart's philosophy, offers fresh and alternative approaches to well-being. These approaches can be further developed in an upcoming future project and are underpinned by a comprehensive and extensive theoretical foundation. Essential for teacher education is also the model of the Didactic Triangle as a memorable and *impactful figure*.

5 Outlook in the sense of a conclusion

The unfolding of well-being

Before the introduction of the concept of paradigms and the multiple theoretical perspectives by Fleck (1935a, 1935b) and Kuhn (1969), it was mostly common to only compare the various interpretations of theoretical concepts, wrote Lindenberg & Wippler (1978b, 1978a). We have not clearly seen until then the relations shaped by intentionality, and their analysis and structure are phenomenologically more fruitful than the quest for a correct definition of something or the mere search for mediating aspects. The focus is no longer solely on *the* definition of a concept in a theory from *one* perspective, but rather on the *possible* perspectives and understanding the meanings of an idea from *multiple viewpoints*. So, it's also about becoming aware of concepts and conceptions.

Sir Arthur Stanley Eddington (1882–1944) demonstrated in 1939 in an anthology his understanding of science through the story of the Ichthyologist, "a fish scientist", who as a researcher explores life in the ocean and acquires his knowledge only through the specific (scientific) "*net*" cast into the water: The ichthyologist "casts a net into the water and brings up a fishy assortment. Surveying his catch, he proceeds in the usual manner of a scientist to systematize what it reveals" (p. 16). As long as the net's form remains unchanged, the data found (here fish of a certain size) remains the same, no matter how often the catch is repeated. The "casting of the net corresponds to observation," as Eddington (1939, p. 16) said, and "[a]nything uncatchable by my net is ipso facto outside the scope of ichthyological knowledge and is not part of the kingdom of fishes which has been defined as the theme of ichthyological knowledge. In short, what my net can't catch isn't fish." In applying this analogy, the catch stands for the body of knowledge which constitutes science, and the net for the sensory and intellectual equipment which we use in obtaining it. To translate the analogy: It is often important to reconsider findings

and add new, different ideas. Naturally, the generalizations of the Ichthyologist in this story are valid within his theoretical approach as a net and yet, "the selection is subjective, because it depends on the sensory and intellectual equipment which is our means of acquiring observational knowledge" (Eddington, 1939, p. 16).

Setting aside the analogy, if observation as the *initial basic foundation* of science already offers a variety of ways of understanding, then abstract concepts and terms open up many perspectives. Well-being is an abstract concept that, to make it more approachable for teacher education, should begin with the forms of intentionality to bring them into *awareness*, emphasize *personal responsibility*, and underscore the significance of *meaning-making* in the context of teaching – and as a shaping of *community*. What we capture in the *net of science* depends on the kind of web we design and cast. Building on Gabler's (2004) insights, it becomes evident that *well-being* encompasses a multitude of *diverse* aspects, interconnecting

competencies, abilities, and *literacies.* Well-being is an abstract concept, takes shape as a gestalt where one must recognize and observe the richness of influencing moments (*literacies*) and the respective manifestation of *directedness* that moulds well-being.

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