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Enhancing Teachers' Emotional Awareness Through Continuing Professional Development: Mission Possible?

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ABSTRACT

In the context of the contemporary emphasis on the school's role in supporting student wellbeing, this qualitative study explored the teachers' experience of a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme, which focused on enhancing teachers' emotional awareness within the context of everyday life. An implicit assumption in this approach is that student wellbeing can be nurtured (or undermined) through the *everyday* relations of teaching and learning in which emotional experiences are integrated. Focus groups with 22 primary and secondary school teachers in four schools in Norway were carried out, and a thematic analysis was conducted. The findings provide an illustration of how enhancing emotional awareness can strengthen professional competence in ways that can benefit the wellbeing of both teachers and students. The findings might inform a wider debate across national boundaries about the value of prioritising emotional awareness as an aspect of teachers' CPD regarding their role in supporting student wellbeing.

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Teachers' emotional awareness; continuing professional development (CPD); emotions in the school context; student wellbeing; teachers' role

1. Introduction

Continuing professional development (CPD) is an established concept within the teaching profession that refers to an ongoing process by which teachers seek to enhance their competence. In a constantly changing society, CPD has generally been regarded as contributing to teachers' ability to deliver high quality education and thereby influence student learning outcomes (OECD, 2013; Watson & Michael, 2016). Yet CPD is increasingly regarded as a complex process involving teacher learning alongside applying knowledge in practice in order to benefit student growth and development (Avalos, 2011). Notwithstanding this complexity, the OECD states that there is a "professional obligation of every teacher to be engaged in a career-long quest for better practice" (OECD, 2013, p. 67). While CPD has a long history, explicit demands from policy makers for teachers' professional development, in Norway as elsewhere, are more recent phenomena, which give an added complexity to the term (Sugrue & Mertkan, 2017; Watson & Michael, 2016). While the ebb and flow of CPD priorities reflects societal trends and the varying concerns of policy makers, student wellbeing and the emotional dimensions of teaching and learning have relatively recently

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(re-)emerged as a central concern of schools as part of the public discourse on the purpose of education (Fisher, 2019; Spratt, 2017; Thomas et al., 2016).

In this policy context, expectations regarding how teachers might contribute to fostering students' wellbeing have, somewhat inevitably, come to the fore. Yet the emotional aspects of teaching and learning have received scant attention in either pre-service or in-service training (Brackett et al., 2011; Clack, 2012; Golombek & Doran, 2014; Hargreaves, 1998; Immordino-Yang et al., 2019; McCarthy, 2021; Olsson, 2020; Schonert-Reichl, 2017), a matter that suggests teachers may be uncertain about how to foster students' wellbeing. Furthermore, little is known about teachers' awareness and understanding of the emotional dimensions of teaching and learning, including, for example, their own emotions when experiencing stress related to challenging situations (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2011; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Olsson, 2020; Schonert-Reichl, 2017; Ulloa et al., 2016; Zembylas et al., 2014). Despite extensive research on CPD over the last thirty years, there is a dearth of research on how CPD can enhance teachers' appreciation of the emotional dimensions of their work, which is the departure point for this article. Based on a qualitative study of Norwegian primary and secondary school teachers, we explored the following research question: *how do teachers make sense of emotional awareness in the context of their everyday practices after participating in a CPD programme?* We start by providing a conceptual overview of current approaches adopted by schools to foster wellbeing as well as contextualising the relevance of emotional awareness as a dimension of teachers' professional competence.

2. Conceptual Background

There is some ambiguity associated with the concept of wellbeing in an educational context and how it might best be fostered by teachers (McLeod & Wright, 2015; Spratt, 2017; Thomas et al., 2016). While it is well-established that the quality of teacher-student relationships is important for students' wellbeing and their social and emotional development (Brackett et al., 2011; Cornelius-White, 2007; Durlak et al., 2011; Franklin et al., 2012; Immordino-Yang et al., 2019; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Wang & Fletcher, 2016), a core part of the ambiguity rests on differing perspectives on teaching and learning, especially with regard to how to foster students' wellbeing. A common approach has been for schools to integrate specific curricular interventions designed to improve students' social and emotional learning or competence (Ecclestone, 2012; McLeod & Wright, 2015). Such interventions tend to prioritise the learning of skills for competently managing life's problems, through, for example, emotional regulation. Several researchers have, however, drawn attention to not only the pace with which these approaches have gained traction but also the uncritical way in which they have been promoted (Chapman, 2015; Ecclestone & Lewis, 2014; McLeod & Wright, 2015; Spratt, 2017; Thomas et al., 2016; Watson et al., 2012). This body of work has given rise to a rather different perspective on students' wellbeing and the place of the emotions in the purpose of education. Accordingly, if the purpose of schooling is to educate the whole person and enhance each student's opportunity to flourish and lead a valuable life, then cognitive learning and students' emotional and physical existence are intertwined (Biesta, 2015; Eccles & Roeser, 2011; Noddings, 2013; Pring, 2012; Spratt, 2016). This implies that emotions are integral to wellbeing as well as a fundamental dimension of the relational process of learning and development (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2011; Noddings, 2013). This perspective obviates the need for interventions by emphasising the everyday dynamics of relations. Embracing the emotional dimensions of classroom relations, however, complicates the process of teaching. For example, it implies that teachers' emotional awareness should be cultivated, which entails developing their ability to recognise both their own emotions as well as those of others, alongside their ability to influence the emotional climate in a particular context (Brackett, 2019; Golombek & Doran, 2014; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Olsson, 2020). It is this latter perspective that underpinned the development of the CPD programme that is the focus of this article. In particular, the programme used emotional awareness as a key construct, and it is to this we now turn.

2.1. Contextualising Emotional Awareness

It has become widely accepted that emotions – defined as reactions to important events at a conscious and unconscious level (Ojala, 2013) – are a fundamental dimension of human existence. At the same time, emotions are increasingly viewed as being influenced by the values and norms of the surrounding culture (Evans, 2003; Goleman, 1996; Hochschild, 2012) and thus viewed as relational. In the school context, Olsson (2020) describes the social and dynamic nature of emotions using the expression *relational curiosity*, which "shifts the focus away from curiosity as an individual experience and towards curiosity as a phenomenon that is inextricably linked to the relations and relationships conditioning social interactions" (Olsson, 2020, p. 181). Moreover, viewing emotions as relational is consistent with conceptualising emotions as a combination of unconscious and conscious elements (Greenberg, 2012). In this paper we draw on these ideas by using the concept *emotional awareness,* not primarily as a set of skills that can be learned once and for all, but rather as an expression of being accepting and curious about emotions (Evans, 2003; Greenberg, 2011; Olsson, 2020). Our understanding of emotional awareness, therefore, includes the following dimensions: the ability to recognise when emotions are present in oneself and others; being attentive to emotional expressions, our own and others'; being attentive to what might be causing an emotional reaction; and acknowledging the effect emotions can have on oneself and others.

Understanding emotional awareness as an accepting and curious construct differs from the tendency to focus only on the so-called positive emotions. Emotional awareness thus also views "negative" emotions as a potential resource to support wellbeing, learning and progress rather than simply regarding them as disturbing and unwanted and therefore hampering a good quality life (Brackett, 2019; Ehrenreich, 2010; Quinlan & Hone, 2020). On this point David (2017b, November) argues that "being positive has become a new form of moral correctness", a tendency that can give rise to norms and preferences towards the positive, pleasant emotions, marginalising the more troublesome emotions in the process (David, 2017a; Ehrenreich, 2010). If the sociocultural norms and preferences lean towards positive and pleasant emotions, there is then little room for vulnerable, non-optional, and uncontrollable aspects of human existence, which in turn, can diminish our vocabulary, awareness, and competence for dealing with discomfort, distress, and pain experienced (Brown, 2018; David, 2017a; Ehrenreich, 2010; Vetlesen, 2004/2009). This conceptualisation of human beings as affective and social people draws attention to the emotions as signposts that can help us with the conditions and circumstances in which we live, part of which relates to being able to gain insight into the limits of what we can control or influence (Vetlesen, 2004/2009). Emotional awareness can give insight into experience, which has the potential to help people understand situations and explore the potential alternatives in acting and responding (David, 2017a; Greenberg, 2011). Enhancing teachers' understanding of emotional awareness has the potential to help them better appreciate the relational dynamics of teaching and learning situations. For this reason, it was the core concept presented and explored in the CPD programme.

2.2. The KLAPP-CPD Programme: Development and Context

The CPD programme in this study is called KLAPP (**K**ompetanse i **L**ærernes **A**rbeid med **P**ositiv **P**sykisk helse, which translates to English as Teachers' competence in students' psychological wellbeing). KLAPP was developed by a collaborative school development network based in nine municipalities in one county in Norway. This network invited the university-based research team to contribute to increasing their competence in emotional awareness. Interest in this topic among teachers in the network had grown during their involvement in various student programmes on emotional regulation, from which teachers identified a need to learn more about the emotions, especially as they related to the dynamics of their interactions with students. In order to address the needs that the teachers had highlighted, the KLAPP-CPD programme included a basic theoretical introduction to the emotions (see below) and facilitated opportunities for the teachers to

identify and discuss everyday situations where they needed to be more competent in responding constructively to difficulties. As KLAPP was developed collaboratively, a resource team of teachers from various schools in the network suggested relevant ways to work with the theory as well as developing and trying out various exercises that could connect their everyday experiences to the theory. As the cultural context will shape teachers' values and beliefs about their role, especially with regard to the emotional dimensions of teaching and learning, it is relevant to note that the development of this CPD programme took place in Norway, which is a high-income Nordic country with long social democratic traditions, influenced by centuries of reformed Christianity as the dominant religion.

Theoretically, the KLAPP-CPD programme was developed by synthesising several well-established theoretical perspectives related to emotional awareness as outlined above (Brackett, 2019; David, 2017a; Evans, 2003; Greenberg, 2011), alongside the integration of Self Determination Theory (SDT) on intrinsic motivation (Reeve & Jang, 2006; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Wang et al., 2019). A key aim of the KLAPP-CPD programme was that it sought to explain the dynamics between emotions and basic psychological needs as characteristic of human beings, and thereby sought to name and normalise situations and reactions which both teachers and students might experience. Thus, Self Determination Theory (SDT) was used as the underpinning framework for the CPD programme, given its focus on the three basic needs of relatedness, competence and autonomy and their connection to emotional reactions. As some emotions can be more challenging to deal with than others, especially in the school context, the CPD programme dwelt on particular emotions that were typically regarded as negative and troublesome to teachers, and focused on how to show openness and interest in understanding what needs might lie behind those emotions, rather than trying to extinguish (or regulate) such emotions.

The KLAPP-CPD programme lasted for 6–8 months at each of the schools. It consisted of three two-hour lectures during the first two months alongside meetings in groups for reflection. Between four to six months later there was a follow-up lecture and further group meetings where each group planned how to continue to work with the KLAPP-CPD model in their monthly meetings. The lectures were given by the first author and the group meetings between the lectures were facilitated by the head teachers.

In the group meetings, the teachers were invited to identify situations from everyday school life that they found to be somehow challenging for students and/or teachers in the sense that they could lead to emotional reactions of some sort, for example, the feeling of being frustrated, irritated, overwhelmed, anxious, powerless, and so on. The teachers analysed such situations, reflecting in groups how new approaches from the KLAPP-CPD programme could apply in these situations.

3. Method

3.1. Data Gathering Procedures, Context, and Participants

A qualitative approach with a primarily inductive design was adopted for this study, as the purpose was to understand the teachers' experiences and perceptions from their participation in the KLAPP-CPD programme, expressed in their own words (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Focus groups were used as the method of data-gathering, as these have been shown to be a suitable way to examine experiences and perceptions from several participants (Saldaña, 2016). The open discussions in focus groups also have the advantage of bringing variety and breadth into the discussions, as the participants' associations, thoughts, and spontaneous expression can lead the direction of the discussion (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Saldaña, 2016). Moreover, as meaning is created collectively, constructed, and developed through dialogue with others, focus group discussions can also contribute to a joint construction of meaning, a process where the participants are seeing and articulating how they make sense of their experience (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). The research team developed a focus group schedule with open questions related to the research question, in order to encourage

the participants to express their viewpoints, perspectives, concerns, and questions, focusing on what was salient to them (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Saldaña, 2016), for example, how would you describe the content of the KLAPP-CPD programme, and, how have you experienced applying KLAPP in your everyday practices. Every effort was made to create a climate in the focus groups that facilitated an open and genuine discussion among each group, encouraging all teachers to contribute and helping them feel able to articulate those issues that were salient to them. In this regard, the aim was for focus groups to contribute contextual richness that would provide a sound basis for a comprehensive analysis.

The school development network had recruited four combined schools (K 1–10) to participate in the KLAPP-CPD programme, based on these schools' interest in contributing to the development of a training programme for teachers. The focus group participants were recruited from these four schools, after their participation in the programme. The four schools were different in size; three were medium-sized (150–250 students) and one was a large school (more than 350 students). Two of the schools were in small industrial towns, and two were in village/rural environments. For pragmatic reasons, the school administration recruited participants to the focus groups, based on criteria provided by the researcher to represent the variation within the teacher groups at each of the schools, for example, with regard to which grade and subject they taught, years of experience, age, and gender. Each focus group had 4–6 participants. Altogether, 22 teachers participated (16 females and six males) and their teaching experience varied from one to 44 years, with an average of 21 years. Two to three weeks after the final KLAPP-CPD session, teachers from the four schools participated in the first focus group (one group at each school). The participants were invited to share how they made sense of the KLAPP-CPD programme. Three to five months later, the same participants were invited to a second focus group, where the topic for the discussion was how they had worked with the KLAPP-CPD programme in the context of their everyday practices. All focus groups were conducted in Norwegian, took place at a private meeting room at each of the four schools, and lasted between 60–90 min. The first author was the moderator in all eight (4 + 4) focus groups.

3.2. Data Analysis

All focus group transcripts were treated as one data set after a preliminary examination of the two rounds of focus groups at different times concluded that they did not diverge in any significant way. Likewise, we did not see any variation in responses based on the teachers' gender, nor the age of children they were teaching. Thematic analysis (TA) was used, which is a systematic process for identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns of shared meaning, guided by the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2017). The active and generative process of thinking, reflecting, and developing themes or core concepts that underpin or unite patterns of shared meanings is what Braun and Clarke (2019) call reflexive TA. First, the transcripts were coded by the first author. After a few preliminary readings of the transcripts, the raw data were labelled with codes associated with the research question. Then, codes were grouped into categories, with the wider research team discussing comparisons within and across categories to determine patterns and relationships, a process which led to identifying themes. Codes were built into themes through a process of comparison within and across transcripts. In the early stage of the process, we grouped the codes in two categories, where the first was about the teachers' reflections about their own practices and their perspectives and judgements underlying their many decisions during a school day (examples of codes: (a) in class-management situations talking to the entire student group, (b) in their interactions with students individually, (c) in their cooperation with colleagues or parents). The second related to teachers' reflections on how they understood the students' perspectives and their underlying actions and inactions (examples of codes: (a) students engaged or not in school-work, (b) students in social situations of various forms, (c) students' lives outside school). Further comparison between and across transcripts led to the refinements of these two categories

into the two main themes: the first related to their reflections regarding increased emotional awareness in everyday situations, and the second concerned their perceptions of possibilities for adjusting their own practices. The development of the two main themes was a process of reflexive collaboration within the research team, questioning and querying assumptions and attempting to generate a rich, nuanced, and valid reading of the data. The analysis also involved examining the ways in which the two main themes related to each other. Quotations were selected to illustrate the findings and were translated into English by two of the authors. All teachers were given fictional names to preserve their anonymity. Codes were used to identify the eight focus groups. FG 1a to FG 4a referred to the first round of focus groups, and FG 1b to FG 4b to the second round.

3.3. Ethical Considerations

As the topic of the focus group discussion was emotional awareness in teachers' everyday practices, there was some risk that discussions could lead to participants sharing sensitive issues (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Prior to the study's approval by the Regional Ethical Committee, the research team worked on how to facilitate the focus groups in order to minimise the risk of harm to participants. The main researcher informed participants at the four schools that the overall purpose of the study was to explore whether such a CPD programme made sense to the teachers, and that it was their genuine experiences and reflections we were interested in, whatever those might be. Informed consent was obtained from all the teachers when they were asked to participate in focus groups, and it was underlined that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the research at any time. The same information was given in the introduction to the focus groups sessions, and it was emphasized that they were invited to discuss and share as they do in their regular team meetings with colleagues. They were informed that their discussions would be digitally recorded and that the data would be transcribed verbatim and anonymised.

4. Findings

At an overarching level, the teachers in this study considered the KLAPP-CPD programme to be relevant and useful for their everyday lives as teachers, especially in terms of making them more aware of the significance of emotions in the school context. The teachers described various commonplace situations that they came to see in a different light after the programme, referring to how they understood a situation and interpreted the students' actions and inactions, as well as how they tended to respond to the students. The teachers explained how learning about emotional awareness had led to some changes in their interactions with the students, for example, they had become more attentive to the students' perspectives when trying to motivate them to work harder. Furthermore, they described how these new insights made them want to continue the work on developing these dimensions of their work. Two main themes were developed: (1) strengthening competence through enhancing everyday emotional awareness, and (2) challenging everyday practices through the CPD-process. In what follows, these two themes are elaborated and illustrated with anonymised quotations from the focus groups.

4.1. Theme 1: Strengthening Competence Through Enhancing Everyday Emotional Awareness

This theme refers to how the teachers came to see their emotional awareness as a significant dimension of their professional competence after participating in the KLAPP-CPD programme. They described how it had introduced them to new perspectives on the emotional dimensions of common relational situations in school, with regard to both their own and their students' actions, responses, and patterns of interpretation. This was the case with regard to their enhanced awareness about the general connection between psychological needs and emotions (for students, as well as

teachers), especially in relation to so-called negative emotions, such as sadness, irritation, anger, or anxiety. Rather than seeing these kinds of emotions as something unwanted, they had become more interested in recognising, understanding, and exploring the full array of emotions: "*It is about learning, somehow, that a feeling is not wrong, but it is about how you deal with that feeling*". (Emma, FG 3b). Spending time learning about and reflecting on how to foster students' wellbeing had helped bring to the surface a better appreciation of the emotions as representing a "signal system" that could help in identifying and understanding the students' psychological needs. Consequently, they viewed the starting point for helping students deal with their emotions to be an acceptance of how they were feeling. The teachers referred to a generalised view in society at large, which was reflected in the school context, that negative emotions were something undesirable, and something that should therefore be minimised. They saw themselves as having been imbued with such a viewpoint, such as, for example, when dealing with situations where the students had reviled negative emotions, such as boredom, irritation, anger, and sadness. Hitherto, they would have attempted to reason the students out of their negative feelings, or commented on a seemingly inappropriate action, rather than showing interest in why students were feeling the way they were. Therefore, they had found it helpful to be encouraged to think in a different way about common situations, which had benefits for themselves as well as students, as FG 4b discussed:

Julia: Somehow one is not allowed to display that you have a bad day.
Emilie: No, there is no room to allow yourself … Sometimes you should be allowed to unleash the feelings, lay down and be sad, or …
Kathrine: That is why I think we perhaps have to learn how to put words on things. It is not a matter of course that they have those words, neither students nor adults. Or that we are aware of what we feel.

Thus, teachers had become more curious about understanding emotions as a subjective response to an experience. They had also developed a heightened awareness about how informative it can be to understand emotions, rather than simply inferring what was going on the basis of a student's actions or responses in a specific situation. In this regard, they had become interested in what might lie behind students' conduct, especially when they expressed negative emotions. The teachers described how they had become more sensitive to the students' emotional signals, and tried to approach the students with curiosity, rather than simply giving them instructions:

Chris: I have become more aware about trying to see the student in a slightly different way, to be more sensitive to them – "why do you sit like this? why are you like that? what are you thinking of today?" (FG 4a)

They described these insights as important, not only with regard to students' emotions, but also with regard to themselves. In terms of the latter, they identified feeling overwhelmed or perceiving shortcomings in themselves as teachers. However, they had come to recognise a need to practice how to explore and understand the signals conveyed by emotions in order to be able to give better guidance – to themselves and to the students – about how to respond to the needs the emotions might reveal.

While teachers expressed a more nuanced understanding of students' conduct in classroom situations, they also talked about trying to adjust how they talked to the students in such circumstances. In this regard, they had become more aware of the potential significance of relatively small variations in how they talked to students and the specific language they used. For example, they saw that they were better able to express their intended support for students:

John: I think about how small adjustments in how we express ourselves make quite a big difference in the meaning of what we say, […]
Sara: Yes, this point about flexible language. And in the specific situation, to be more flexible in the language, to think about some other way to express oneself, perhaps. (FG 1a)

Many of the teachers described how they would make more effort to talk to their students in a way that first conveyed that they recognised and accepted how they were feeling, before starting to give guidance on their conduct and how they expressed their emotions and needs. Their experience was that the students were much more receptive to them when they used this kind of approach in the classroom. According to the teachers, they had also become more aware of the individual personalities within the class, especially regarding students' emotional reactions. This meant that they were more attentive to their own response to any individual student as well as to the specific situation. Thus, they viewed their responses to students as being more adequate and helpful. As an illustration, Emma (FG 3b) referred to a situation where two students were fighting:

> Two of my students started to fight in the classroom, and one of them was furious and ended up pushing the other one, so that he fell on the floor. The one that pushed then became very sorry, and I took him aside to talk with him. I was not angry, but said "I understand that you are angry, and it is in fact OK to get angry". A few days later we had a follow-up conversation, and then he told me that he appreciated that I had not been angry with him, and that I had said that it is OK to get angry. For he had been so upset that he ended up weeping, and that is somehow embarrassing for boys at his age.

Moreover, the teachers had come to realise how important the students' emotions were in the light of the overriding purpose of schooling, which they saw as giving a broader meaning and purpose to their work. They pointed out that they rarely had the chance to dwell on these longer-term perspectives, as their everyday school lives were characterised by the focus on what should be their next step in pursuit of students' academic progress. In developing greater insight into the emotional dimensions of everyday classroom relations they had also been stimulated to reconsider their overall professional mandate, namely, to nurture the students' growth as human beings and their sense of meaning in life. They thus felt better equipped to be more attentive to this aspect of their professional competence especially in the light of a holistic perspective on education. "*This CPD-programme stimulated considerations and reflections about what it is to be a human being, in relation to the work with all the subjects. […] This helps us address all the demands to the students more humanely, in the midst of it all.*" (Katrine, FG 4a).

4.2. Theme 2: Challenging Everyday Practices Through the CPD-process

This second theme refers to how the teachers were stimulated to reflect, both individually and collectively, on their everyday practices, which gave rise to varying degrees of recognition relating to their own tendencies towards automatic reactions in many commonplace situations. Relatedly, they reflected on the extent to which those practices were as good as they were intended to be, or whether they needed adjusting. The teachers referred to the groupwork they were involved with as part of the KLAPP-CPD programme during which they had shared experiences from circumstances where they had felt uncertain about what might be a constructive way of dealing with a particular situation or issue. They had found it helpful to ponder, share, and discuss such experiences, which brought to the surface the realisation that at times they had probably not been as helpful to the student as intended. Such contemplation and discussion had led to attempts to adjust how they interacted with their students, and to further reflections on such attempts, especially when related to challenging situations:

> Then you become more aware in the daily life and perhaps ponder. And you look at yourself too, "oh, I have not done this in the right manner earlier". You start to reflect, and then there is a process within yourself, and I think you will improve, and you might be able to contribute with something [new] in the everyday work at school. (Emilie, FG 4a)

Moreover, the teachers had been stimulated to reflect more on the students' psychological needs, and, in particular, their need for some autonomy. This was something of a new departure point for them, yet during the CPD process they found that it made sense to recognise this need, both in their own lives, as well as in their students. They discussed how their use of firm and controlling

language in support of the learning process could sometimes hamper the students' motivation for learning, rather than stimulate it. They reflected on how they, without intending to, had used language that challenged their students' autonomy, which did not always have the intended outcome on the students, but on the contrary, often made the situation worse. They had come to the realisation that their tendency to adopt a controlling style at times reflected their concerns about not being on top of the situation. While they had become sensitised to some of the ways in which they used language to control the students in particular circumstances, they also found it challenging to adjust their thinking and practices, especially regarding the students' need for autonomy. On the one hand, they had become aware of how recognising and supporting the students' autonomy could be beneficial, stimulating the teachers to think about ways of letting go of some of their more controlling ways of regulating the learning process and the students' activity. At the same time, they wanted to retain the leadership that they felt they needed in the classroom. The teachers sought to resolve this dilemma by seeking an appropriate balance, that is to say, as combining the control they felt they needed as leaders in the classroom while at the same time being autonomy-supporting. Finding such a balance was, nonetheless, challenging.

> Since we learned about autonomy-supporting teachers, I have pondered about this and what words we choose in everyday situations. About being supportive and constructive, and not controlling. I want to be the person who helps them figure out things, and not the one who points his finger all the time. I wish for them to find intrinsic motivation for doing things, and that they might discover this together with me. It is so good when I achieve that, but at times it is very difficult to hold back the other teacher, the controlling teacher, the one who … yes, the one who used to make them quiet in the short term. (John, FG 1b)

This illustrates how the KLAPP-CPD programme had challenged aspects of their everyday teaching practice that hitherto had gone unnoticed. Thus, the teachers' new insights gave them a renewed perspective on many common situations, which at least in the short-term, made them unsure of how to develop in a way that gave better recognition to the psychological needs of students in teaching and learning situations. In turn, teachers saw this as generating a need to continue to discuss and reflect with their colleagues as part of a process of reconsidering their often reflexive actions with students. This brought to the surface some concerns that an autonomy-supporting teacher as described in the KLAPP-CPD programme conflicted with what they had been trained to do with regard to being class leaders. As Lisa (FG 2b) said: "*To me this [new insight from KLAPP] is very much in conflict with what we have learned about classroom management, as it is two very different ways of interacting with the students.*"

5. Discussion

This study set out to explore how teachers make sense of emotional awareness in the context of their everyday practices after participating in a CPD programme designed to foster students' wellbeing. Overall, the findings suggest that learning about the emotional dimensions of teaching and learning was a new departure point for the teachers in this study and one which was seen as relevant and important to their everyday work. In particular, the study has shed light on three core aspects of professional development and the ways in which it can give rise to shifts in teachers' practices. First, although CPD is recognised as a complex process involving teacher learning alongside applying knowledge in practice to benefit student growth and development (Avalos, 2011), the KLAPP programme engendered a context that was conducive to critical reflection on everyday life as a teacher. Moreover, critical reflection gave rise to a better understanding of what aspects of their practice they wanted to change as well as a sharpened appreciation of what was worth preserving. This might be explained in terms of the participatory features of the KLAPP-CPD programme as well as the salience that the concept of emotional awareness had for the teachers. In particular, the theoretical framework underpinning the programme highlighted the complexity and contradictions embedded in the school context and in the teachers' professional role. This meant that rather than promoting notions of "best practice", developing emotional awareness was posited as an aspect

of professional judgement (Saugstad, 2002). It is also worth emphasising that CPD processes create the much-needed space for teachers to critically discuss commonplace dilemmas and tensions (Samnøy et al., 2022). Moreover, the findings suggest that the KLAPP-CPD process created a climate within which teachers felt sufficiently psychologically safe to accept their own vulnerability in classroom situations, which facilitated a willingness to scrutinise aspects of their experience and share examples with some degree of openness and curiosity (Brown, 2018). This meant that discussions were anchored in real life situations they had found challenging. This brought to the fore a further dimension of the dynamics of the KLAPP-CPD process, namely, teachers' recognition of their own emotional reactivity to difficult but commonplace situations and the consequences of their actions for students. The KLAPP-CPD process thus created the conditions for everyday practice to be seen "*as a shared social experience that must be understood through collaborative work and shared reflection*" as advocated by McArdle and Coutts (2010, p. 206). This shared sense-making was facilitated by critically reflecting together on situations of uncertainty and unpredictability, supported by the development of emotional awareness among the teachers. As a consequence, changes in everyday situations were enacted.

Second, the findings indicate that professional competence can be strengthened by supporting teachers to develop their relational work with students, a key aspect of which was being sensitive to the emotional context of classroom dynamics. As indicated above, reflecting on difficult situations brought to the fore a new appreciation of the interdependence of teachers' and students' emotions (Olsson, 2020). These situations were seen as requiring teachers to show their professional judgement in how they spoke and acted, given the many possible ways of responding to these emotional tensions. Yet teachers had also developed a heightened sensitivity to how their earlier practices sometimes could challenge the students' need for autonomy. Accordingly, developing teachers' emotional awareness can help strengthen their professional judgement, the latter playing a role in helping teachers navigate the everyday unpredictability of classroom relations. For the teachers in this study, it also meant that they were better prepared for balancing the students' autonomy with their own agency. This supports the point made by Wang et al. (2019), namely, that teachers must try to balance supporting students' autonomy while leading the classroom. Developing emotional awareness can thus lead to a new perspective on class management, characterised by teachers becoming less concerned with the immediate need to control difficult situations and more focused on the longer-term development of sound relations. These new insights, however, created additional uncertainties about how to deal with such situations. The corollary of this was that at times teachers found it difficult to decide on the "right" balance between (seemingly) competing concerns. This seems to suggest that professional judgement is enhanced through emotional awareness and might be viewed as a core quality (McArdle & Coutts, 2003).

Third, the CPD process can have a valuable role in equipping teachers with the language and vocabulary necessary for engaging in their development and this was particularly the case with regard to the emotions. Even though the teachers in this study could make sense of the content about emotions, especially when it was in line with their own experiences, they did not have the language for helping them think about the emotions in everyday situations, especially with regard to constructing verbal responses that gave recognition to emotions. By participating in the KLAPP-CPD programme, the teachers learned an expanded vocabulary that facilitated their understanding of, for example, the importance of recognising, accepting, and showing tolerance for various emotions – including so-called negative emotions – as an inevitable part of (school-)life, rather than as unwanted and disturbing elements. A broader and more relevant vocabulary was valuable in providing the basis from which interest in what might be generating emotions could be shown and articulated in a more nuanced form (Brackett, 2019; David, 2017a). In turn, this allows the focus to shift from trying to help the students out of an often troublesome emotional experience towards acceptance. In this regard, the KLAPP-CPD programme had developed their relational curiosity, as Olsson (2020) has advocated, which represents a contrast to the common societal expectations of being positive. Furthermore, it represents a capacity for embracing dimensions

of life which are challenging and troublesome, and often beyond anybody's control, a strategy that has been supported by David (2017a) and Vetlesen (2004/2009). This perspective is based on sensitivity to the emotions and the vocabulary to communicate appropriately in particular situations. Furthermore, this perspective differs from the language of classroom management, which communicates how teachers seek to exert their control over events and situations. Alternatively, by showing interest in and sensitivity towards the students' emotions, the teachers become better role models for conveying how to approach situations in a way that gives less emphasis to the issue of control and more to exploration as a path to understanding and possibly resolution.

Overall, the findings from this study illustrate how teachers' emotional awareness can be enhanced in ways that strengthen their professional competence to navigate the everyday emotional dimensions of teaching and learning. In this way, teachers felt better able not only to manage their classes but also support the mental wellbeing of students. Moreover, it was evident that the new insights they developed extended beyond specific classroom situations and issues to include a broader appreciation of their role as teachers in creating meaningful educational experiences. In this regard, the KLAPP-CPD programme might be seen as contributing to a re-evaluation of teachers' beliefs about the purpose of education (Biesta, 2015, 2016) as well as opening up possibilities for teachers to reclaim professional responsibility (Sugrue & Mertkan, 2017) for contributing to students' wellbeing in a context of shifting and expanding roles.

This was a small-scale exploratory study based in Norway. Its qualitative nature generated detailed data that gave insight into the everyday lives of a sample of primary and secondary school teachers who had participated in a specific CPD programme designed to enhance their emotional awareness. In keeping with a qualitative approach, the aim was to build an understanding of how the specific CPD process enhanced teachers' emotional awareness. The findings represent some theoretically generalisable insights that are applicable to other similar situations. Future work, however, should try to recruit a more diverse sample, for example, in relation to including more men. Furthermore, there is always a question over the extent to which shifts in thinking and practices that were highlighted become embedded. A follow-up study would allow some light to be shed on this issue.

6. Conclusion and Implications

The findings from this study raise some important policy and practice issues about teachers' professional development in the context of the contemporary emphasis on the school's role in supporting student wellbeing. The KLAPP-CPD programme, somewhat unusually perhaps, approached the subject of student wellbeing by focusing on enhancing teachers' emotional awareness within the context of everyday life. An implicit assumption in this approach is that student wellbeing can be nurtured (or undermined) through the *everyday* relations of teaching and learning, that is to say, through the routines and practices of everyday life in which emotional experiences are integrated. Wellbeing is thus primarily connected to social relations and the emotions that are generated therein, within and beyond school, with knowledge and skills having a subsidiary role. Such a perspective displaces the need for specific interventions such as those discussed earlier, and gives more emphasis to teachers' emotional awareness and the language they use in everyday encounters.

Furthermore, we suggest that CPD can have a supporting role in teachers' day-to-day work, however, the challenge is to find sufficient space to accommodate it. The prioritising of student academic performance in education policy in many countries appears to have had the unintended consequence of leaving little space for professional development in areas such as student wellbeing and teachers' emotional awareness in either initial or continuing teacher education. While the KLAPP-CPD programme was developed in a particular (Norwegian) social and cultural context, as a learning process it has several features that are applicable to other contexts. Perhaps most significantly, the programme provides an illustration of how enhancing emotional awareness can strengthen professional competence in ways that can benefit the wellbeing of both teachers and students. Thus,

although we draw on Norwegian teachers' perspectives, the findings might inform a wider debate across national boundaries about the value of prioritising emotional awareness as an aspect of teachers' CPD.

This research set out to explore the extent to which a CPD programme such as KLAPP, can enhance teachers' understanding and awareness of the emotional dimensions of teaching in ways that give rise to changes in practice. Notwithstanding the complexity of CPD as a process, we conclude that such changes are possible. We suggest that one key element in increasing the likelihood that beneficial outcomes from CPD can be realised is teachers being involved in the development of the programme, which includes valuing the issues that are most salient to them in their professional role.

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