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Promotion of Teacher's Wellbeing: Development and Implementation of a Continuous Formation

By Flavinês Rebolo

Abstract- This article presents the development, implementation and evaluation of a continuous formation program which intended to prevent the teacher's distress and the promotion of their wellbeing. This program has been developed by using Rebolo's teacher's wellbeing/distress analysis framework as well as in the strategies for teacher's professional realization and development posited by Jesus. This program has been structured by having 12 weekly meetings, 1h30 minutes-long, by utilizing exams, inventories, group dynamics and yarning circles, by offering the teachers aiding in coping mechanisms when dealing to everyday challenges of the workplace. The implementation featured 16 teachers from Rede Estadual de Ensino de Campo Grande state school, MS state, Brazil. The evaluations indicated a decrease in stress levels among said teachers as well as the teacher's distress levels and, still, a self-realization of greater wellbeing in and with the workplace.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, complaints regarding distress levels amongst teachers in the workplace is on the rise. Teachers find themselves constantly demanding for changes and adaptations fueled by the rapid transformations in today's societies and schools, driving them to distressing states and illnesses. Teacher demotivation, an elevated level of absentees and job exiting levels, professional dissatisfaction, stress, among other symptoms related to teacher's distress levels can be inferred as responses, conflict strategies or even coping mechanisms used by teachers when coupled with contractual hazards.

There are multiple adversities and factors that result in teacher's distress, such as: lack of teaching resources, lack of support from coworkers and coordination, overworking and too many responsibilities, too many roles, and others. In this context, teachers can produce a multitude of symptoms, ranging from the bio-physical dimension (named blood hypertension, constant migraines, acute fatigue, insomnia, ulcers, etc.), behavioral (absent calls, conflicting behavior, alcohol or substance abuse, low productivity, etc.), emotional (emotional distancing, impatience, irritability, frustration, apathy, loss of professional enthusiasm, etc.) and cognitive (low self-esteem, difficulties decision-making, etc.) (JESUS, 1998, p. 23).

When the teacher's distress sets in, not only does it affects professional satisfaction levels but also

Author: e-mail: flavines.rebolo@uol.com.br

the quality of teaching and the interpersonal relationships both in and out of the school's environment, causing feelings of frustration, mood swings and both physical and psychiatric pathologies. Due to that, it is necessary and urgent to comprehend and create programs that support teachers to face workplace distress and build their wellbeing.

Teacher's wellbeing is the everyday living, with higher frequency and intensity, of positive experiences rooted from affective and cognitive processes stemming from human partnership coupled with the environment (REBOULO and BUENO, 2014) and can inform favorable conditions to teachers so as to, when faced with conflicts and professional difficulties, be able to gleam adequate possibilities of restructuration of the teacher's practices and way of being in the profession.

According to Rebolo (2012b), teacher wellbeing is an existing factor in the relationship between teacher and his or her work that may or may not come to pass, depending on: 1- work characteristics (the work itself and the physical, socioeconomic and relational conditions present to its performance); 2- the way these characteristics are viewed and assessed by the teacher as well as the result, either positive or negative, of such assessment; 3- the ways in which said teacher faces and solves the conflicts created from the discrepancies between his or her expectancies and realities, between his or her internal organization and the work organization. It is, as such, a multidimensional phenomenon.

According to Jesus (2007, P. 33) "the distress degree depends on, mostly, the way in which the teacher copes with the potential sources of said distress, enabling this coping mechanism to be learned" (unofficial translation). This learning process starts in college, during the first steps in the teacher's formation, taking the form of internships and other theoretical-practical activities, from which the academic, future teacher, is granted the possibility of experiencing and preparing for the professional realities. This preparation should include, amongst other aspects, the necessary aid to create conflict strategies, regarding cognitive, emotional and social aspects, which is essential to the generation and maintenance of teacher wellbeing. However, during start of the formative years, not always has the teacher the necessary preparation to face the new challenges being laid in the Education field, and, as such, the continuous formation, as already been pointed

out by various authors, some of which Nóvoa (1991, 1992, 2007), Gatti (1997, 2003), Veiga (2002), Marin (2003), Thiele (2009), Sampaio (2008) Zacharias (2012), Rebolo (2012a, 2012b, 2014) Stöbal et al (2010), Mendes (2012), now has a very important role in the professional development process and in the making of the teacher wellbeing.

There are many frameworks of continuous formation and this article presents a proposition that aims at the prevention of teacher distress and the promotion of teacher wellbeing, offering aid so that the teachers are made able to create coping mechanisms regarding difficulties and dissatisfactions related to work. This program has been built as a basis to the analysis of the teacher wellbeing/distress posited by Rebolo (2012b) and in the proposition presented by Jesus (1998, 2006, 2007). It has been developed alongside teachers from the Rede Estadual de Ensino de Campo Grande state school, MS state, Brazil. The theoretical contribution adopted proceedings and its results are presented in the following.

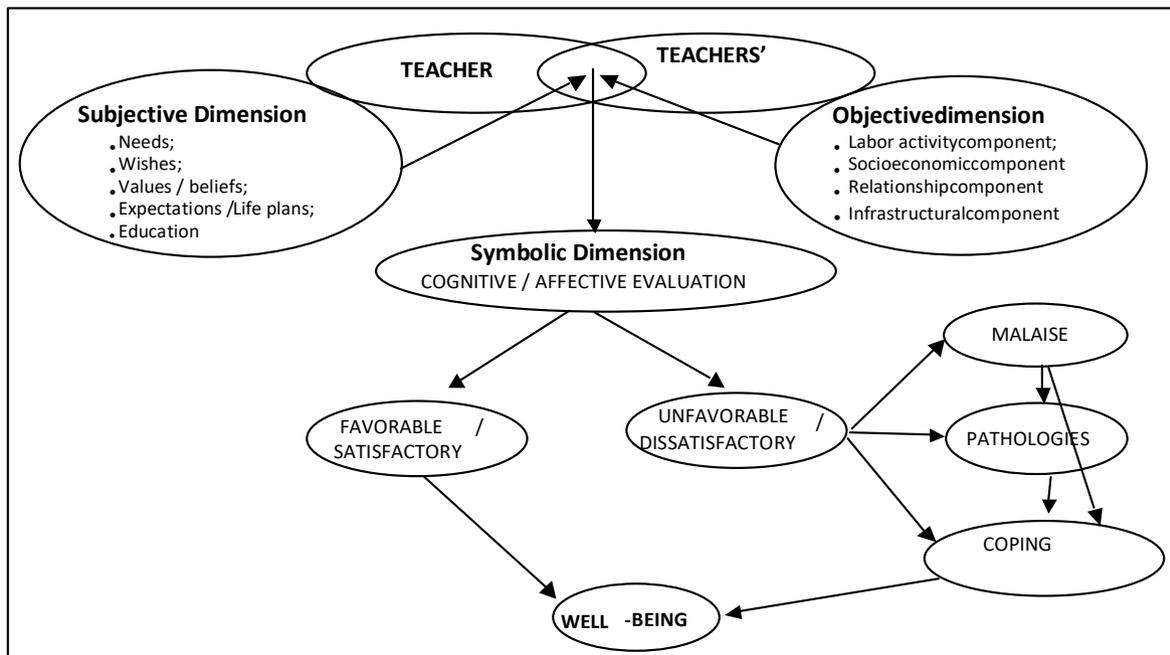
II. FROM TEACHER DISTRESS TO TEACHER WELLBEING: AN ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

To Rebolo (2012, p.24) teacher wellbeing “is the result of a complex process which, even though conscripted to subjective aspects, is highly related to the specificities of this field of work and to the social and organization context where said work is performed”. This way, teacher wellbeing can be considered a dynamical process, built during the professional everyday life and it presents itself in the intersection of two dimension, an objective one (containing aspects

such as socioeconomic, relational, from the work activity proper and infrastructural of the workplace) and a subjective one (related to the formation, life projects, needs and expectancies of a particular teacher). In the dimensional intersection of these aspects is where the possibility of wellbeing experience can be observed.

This intersection is called symbolic dimension and regards the correspondences (or not correspondence) between personal characteristics and the components of the objective dimension of the work. The teachers' assessments (cognitive and affective) of his or her own self, of his or her responsibilities in activities and of his or her existing conditions for the performance of work are the elements which form this dimension. It is starting there the moment in which it is possible to see the impact of the objective dimension of work in the teacher wellbeing. When this assessment results is positive (greater number of factors seen as satisfactory) wellbeing at work is possible; and, when it is negative (greater number of factors seen as dissatisfactory) distress at work could be occurring and/or a number of pathologies and/or conflict strategies. The coping mechanisms are all the cognitive and behavioral resources developed by one's sense of coping with the internal and external demands seen as excessive, and that allow said person, the teacher in this case, set them in motion to overcome adversarial situations in his or her everyday life (JESUS, 1998). It is believed that, if teachers are prepared to create adequate conflict strategies, it would be possible to minimize distress and the manifestation of pathologies related to work. In Table 1 this framework is shown schematically.

Table 1: Summary of the model posited by Rebolo to the teacher well-being/malaise analysis.



Source: Rebolo, 2012b, p. 33.

The degree of teacher satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the components from both the objective dimension and subjective dimension can be known by applying the Teacher Well-Being Scale (EBED) (REBOLLO and CONSTANTINO, 2020). By analyzing the EBED results, the factors portrayed as dissatisfactions by teachers, which, by design, are the potential generators of distress, must be the target of interceptive motions by the school management as well as by the educational systems.

The subjective dimension, and its impact in the building of the teacher wellbeing, can be known when assessing collected data from semi structured interviews, focal groups and the teachers' professional life narratives, analyzed through the content analysis (model posited by Bardin, 2011) or thematic content analysis (model posited by Schütze, 2007a, 2007b).

Both the dissatisfactions with the objective dimension of work and the dissatisfactions stemming from the subjective dimension can be potently minimized by the teacher continuous formation intervention strategy, avoiding teacher distress and building teacher wellbeing. The continuous formation here presented had this purpose and, more specifically, to offer aid so as the teachers were made able to create conflict strategies.

III. CONTINUOUS FORMATION: POSSIBILITIES TO THE PROMOTION OF TEACHER WELLBEING

The rise in numbers of teacher continuous formation programs, in the last few decades, is based in some criteria that aim to adapt the teachers to the technological innovations and to the exponential growth of scientific knowledge. However, as Diniz et al (2011, p. 15) denounces, "there is the need to conceive self-knowledge environments and ethical thinking in the formation because it is but in human plane where theory and practice are joined; and it is but in the one self's plane that formation takes place". In that same line, Dalben (2004, p. 7) posits that "continuous formation cannot be conceived just as a means of accumulating courses, talks, seminars, of knowledge or techniques, but as a work of critical thinking about practices and the permanent construction of a personal and professional identity in mutual interaction".

The need, presented by the wider social context facing contemporary education, demands that teachers, beyond the mastery of new teaching methods and techniques, have other abilities that lead to a critical thinking about their values and beliefs, their professional identity and social role. According to Jesus (1998), "one of the main measures to prevent teacher distress correlates to the clarification that teachers portray relatively to the professional practice and to themselves,

helping them to develop more realistic and adequate conceptions of the teaching profession" (JESUS, 1998, p. 30).

This author does not disregard the need to implement socio-political measures that influence the professional practice, but affirms that the continuous formation must be oriented in way such as "to contribute so that the professional practice be experienced with satisfaction and self-reliance, encouraging the construction of a professional career characterized by personal and interpersonal motivation and development, counting as fundamental criteria of teacher wellbeing" (JESUS, 1998, p 41).

Along with these considerations, this program here presented was developed by the humanistic formation approach, which considers teacher formation a personal development process aiming to the self-knowledge and to the continuous formation method of constructivist framework. Such method is placed in a contractual and interactive-reflexive process based in an

interactive and contextualized reflection, including both theory and practice [...] It foresees assessments and self-assessments of its members' developments [...] It implies a collaboration relationship between the ones in the formation process and the ones overseeing them, predisposed to the knowledge rooted in actions and motions. There is a cooperation context at play in which everyone are co-responsible in the solution of practical issues. It is common the use of focal groups, workshops, debating dynamics as well as experimental exercises followed by discussions. (NÓVOA, 1992, p. 19)

It is important to keep in mind that the "best formation process" will always be conditioned to the specificities of a complex field and that it demands an assortment of the institutional contexts and of the needs and expectations of a given group members. According to Imbernón (2016), this process needs to

[...] ascertain a level of coherence in the formation development taking into account the situational analysis (needs, hopes, emotions, issues, demands...) [...]; a formation process starting from the inside of the group where practical problematical situations are resolved collaboratively (IMBERNÓN, 2016, p. 167)

In this sense, the teacher wellbeing promotion program described below was developed as a continuous formation proposition within the humanistic-constructivist perspective, taking its starting point at a diagnostic stage, where needs and expectations were identified amongst the group of teachers.

IV. THE TEACHER WELLBEING PROMOTION PROGRAM: DIAGNOSTICS AND ACTIVITIES PLANNING

To the development of this Program, two meetings with the teachers were initially set, in the school where the program would take place, with the goal

to present the research project and to apply the diagnostics tool (Teacher Well-Being Scale - EBED -, Rebolo's and Constantino's, 2020), aiming to identify the higher dissatisfaction factors and the main formative needs and expectations in this group of teachers.

Once the scale (EBED), from 64 school teachers was taken, and collected, the factors considered to be very dissatisfactory were identified, namely: work overload, workday, work rhythm, and free time for leisure and family; interpersonal work relationships; collective work, work groups and experience exchange; levels of student interest and indiscipline.

These factors highlighted by the teachers are varied and relate to both the environment and work conditions to subjective aspects (frustration, sense of uselessness in relation to the accomplished work, teacher-student conflicts, etc...). As well as distress and stress, the dissatisfaction with these factors generates a lack of growth perspective and valued professional effort that, according to Lipp (2003, p. 17), "demotivate teachers, who begin to see the school and their own roles as a heavy burden and lacking the personal gratification, their internal motivational efforts start to wane day after day". In this way, the need of measures that aid teachers to adequately cope with these factors becomes paramount, creating the possibility of a better fit to the work context and to the degree of satisfaction and teacher wellbeing.

The results obtained in the first teacher meetings aided the development of the program activities of teacher wellbeing promotion fit to the school reality and to the specific needs of this group of teachers. After identifying the factors which, in the teachers' perception, would be distress and stress triggers, the activities planning to be developed in the following meetings took place.

The program, developed as a proposition of continuous formation, was based upon the proposition

posited by Jesus (1998, 2006, 2007), in which this author posits that the development of self-assessment exercises, the identification of factors that trigger stress, the conflict strategies and relaxation techniques, amongst other activities that aim to "contribute to the development of certain important roles as to prevent or resolve distress situations: entitlement of beliefs management, expectations and attributions, in the sense of a more adequate functional cognitive tool, entitlement to physical symptoms management, entitlement to time and group work management, entitlement of assertiveness, entitlement to leadership and conflict management, rules of healthy lifestyle and personalized coping strategies and perspective of implementation of the professional and personal life learnings" (Jesus, 2006, p. 126).

Studies conducted by Jesus are applied in Brazil for some time already, by various researchers, some of which Sampaio (2008), Zacharias (2012), Rebolo (2012, 2012a, 2014), Stobäus et al (2010), Mendes (2012), from researches and on "thematic interventions approaching the contemporary context, in the sense of promoting theoretical and practical competencies in teacher formation [which in turn] contributing to lowering distress levels and promoting teacher wellbeing". (SAMPAIO et al., 2012, p. 6) (unofficial translation).

In this vein, the Program of teacher wellbeing promotion, presented in Table 2, was constituted in workshops, group dynamics, yarning circles and exam-taking, thematically elated to stress, self-knowledge, self-image, decision making, time management, teamwork, assertiveness, interpersonal relationships, self-esteem, self-control, leadership and anti-stress relaxation techniques, aiming to aid teachers to face work adversities and minimize dissatisfaction detected by the application of the EBED and stress and distress symptoms.

Table 2: Teacher Wellbeing Promotion Program

Meeting	Goals/Activities Performed
I	<p><i>Goals:</i> Presentation of the research and dissatisfaction factors identification Project relating to work for the teachers.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i></p> <p>1- Establishing rapport with the school team (director, coordinators and teachers) and research presentation.</p> <p>2- Applying the Teacher Well-being Scale (EBED), complete version (REBOLO and CONSTANTINO, 2020, p. 446), composed of 37 variables from the objective dimension (socioeconomic, relational, work laboral and infrastructural factors).</p>
II	<p><i>Goals:</i> EBED results presentation and reflection upon these results in teacher wellbeing.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i></p> <p>1- Feedback - delivery and collective as well as discussion of the EBED results (dissatisfaction factors)</p>
III	<p><i>Goals:</i> Initial socialization, group integration, expectations offerings and teacher stress level identification.</p> <p><i>Activities:</i></p> <p>1- Teacher Wellbeing Promotion Program presentation to the participating teachers.</p> <p>2- Group integration regarding the Presentation group dynamic (<i>Each member fills a form with the following fields: Name / Surname / Age / Marital status / Family composition / Graduation / School / A sport / A leisure</i>)</p>

	<p><i>activity / A strength / A weakness / A happy moment / A sad moment / A dream / A fear / A hope. Then they exchange forms. Each member presents the received form).</i></p> <p>3- Application of the Adult Stress Symptoms Inventory (ISSL), from Lipp (2002), from which the teachers' stress levels were identified.</p> <p>The Adult Stress Symptoms Inventory (ISSL), developed and validated by Marilda Lipp (2002), provides an objective measure of stress symptomology in young persons from 15 years old and above, also adults. It is constituted by a list of physical and psychological symptoms which allow the identification of whether a person is stressed, in which phase of its process he or she is (alert, resistance, close-to-exhaustion* and exhaustion) and if his or her symptomology is typical of the physical or psychological dimension. Its application takes proximately 10 minutes and can be performed individually or in groups up to 20 people.</p> <p>4- Teachers' expectations identification about the program, by means of the following dynamic: A letter to him or herself (<i>Individually, each member writes a letter to him or herself as if he or she was writing to his or her best friend. Among the subjects, take into account: how he or she is feeling at the moment, what he or she expects from the program, how he or she expects to be professionally and personally 90 days from now. Fit the letter in an envelope, seal it and write one's name on it. The envelopes are then stored so as to be opened in the last meeting).</i></p>
IV	<p>Goals: Perception of oneself and self-knowledge: distress causes.</p> <p>Activities:</p> <p>1- Stress test delivery (ISSL) applied in the previous meeting, with the collective group data. It is important to make it clear that individual results were delivered to teachers who asked for it, after the meeting, separately, allowing for its secrecy.</p> <p>2- Theoretical presentation and discussion about potential distress triggering factors and main symptoms or psychosomatic, behavioral, emotional and cognitive manifestations of teacher distress and stress.</p> <p>3- Performance of a workshop targeting strategies training to minimize teacher distress and stress (breathing and relaxation techniques)</p>
V	<p>Goals: Perception of oneself and self-knowledge: distress symptoms</p> <p>Activities:</p> <p>1- Self-assessment of particular symptoms and contributing factors to the distress levels of each particular member. (<i>Each member writes a file containing the symptoms he or she has been feeling in the last three months and the potential causes of such symptoms).</i></p> <p>2. Yarning circle. After everybody has concluded the self-assessment, the results are discussed in a yarning circle, summarizing the most common symptoms in the group and the cause of such symptoms.</p> <p>3- Creativity dynamic. (<i>Members were divided into 4-person groups. Each group has to suggest strategies to cope with the symptoms and to try to resolve the contextual work situations which might be related to such symptoms. Then, after each group finishes the task, their suggestions are presented to the whole group).</i></p>
VI	<p>Goals: Physical symptoms management related to stress and distress: relaxation techniques.</p> <p>Activities:</p> <p>1- Theoretical presentation of the relaxation process phases and the benefits of this practice as a tool to control stress.</p> <p>2- Relaxation techniques: warming up; breathing; active and passive physical relaxation; internal relaxation through imagination.</p>
VII	<p>Goals: Identification of the many ways of problem resolution and of the coping strategies.</p> <p>Activities:</p> <p>1- Theoretical presentation and discussion of the main coping strategies that can be used when facing problematic professional situations.</p> <p>2- Identification of the strategies which each teacher uses and the ones which could use when facing difficulties at work, resulting in a strategy plan to be applied in the coming weeks. (<i>Each teacher receives a file with three questions within: 1- Name a distress factor / 2- What have I been doing to resolve this situation / 3- What could I try to do?</i>)</p> <p>3- Yarning circle. After everybody has individually answered the file, teachers share their answers with the group and can widen their strategy plans.</p>
VIII	<p>Goals: Perception of oneself, self-knowledge, self-image and self-esteem.</p> <p>Activities:</p> <p>1- Application of the Self-image and Self-esteem Questionnaire adapted from Stobäus (1983), aiming to detect a series of factors which impact on the self-image and self-esteem framework: organic aspects (genetic and physiological), social (scholarly status, family income, and student realization), intellectual (schooling levels, education and schooling accomplishments) and emotional (personal happiness, social wellbeing and moral integrity).</p> <p>2- Theoretical presentation about the concepts of self-image, self-conceptualization and self-esteem and about how to cope with weaknesses and come to terms and reinforce the positive aspects of each member.</p> <p>3- "Myself and my ideal self" dynamic. Goal: Work on individual strengths and positively reinforce personal worth and self-esteem. (<i>Each member receives a file divided into two columns. In the first column, named "myself", the member has to write five sentences or adjectives that characterize how he or she is or how he or</i></p>

	<i>she sees themselves. In the second column, named "my ideal self", the member has to write five sentences or adjectives that characterize how he or she would like to be or what he or she would like to change on himself or herself. After all members finish, the importance of self-esteem, of the appreciation for each and everyone's physical and psychological attributes and their capabilities is reinforced. In the discussion phase questions such as: What I like most about me? What I like the least about me? Would I be able to change what I don't like?).</i>
IX	Goals: Identification and acquisition of assertiveness abilities. Activities: 1- Theoretical presentation of the characteristics of the assertive behavior abilities. 2- Group Dynamic utilizing the Behavior Deck (LIPP; BENZONI, 2015) 3- Self-assessment of the assertiveness of each of the group's teacher. Assertiveness exercises in situations related to the problematic brought up by the members (<i>In pairs, teachers register two problematic situations experienced in the school and how they reacted to it. When it is finished, everyone returns to the whole group and discuss the reactions when faced with the situations, analyzing them regarding assertiveness, triggered feelings and other possible courses of action</i>).
X	Goals: Acquisition of time management and teamwork competencies. Activities: 1- Discussion about time management and teamwork strategies. (Eisenhower Framework; GTD Method - Getting Things Done). 2- Dynamic: Building today's schedule from Eisenhower Framework.
XI	Goals: Identify and aid the leadership abilities and emotional intelligence development. Activities: 1- Theoretical presentation of the leadership and emotional intelligence concepts. Leadership styles and its implications in the interpersonal relationships. 2- Presentation, by the teachers, of real indiscipline situations and students conflicts, of the strategies used in the management of these situations and the results obtained by using these strategies.
XII	Goals: Self-evaluation, Program evaluation and teacher stress levels re-evaluation. Activities: 1- Reading of the Letter to oneself, written in the first meeting, and writing the response, reporting on the experience, the perceptions and the feelings towards participating in the Program. 2- Yarning circle for the program evaluation, by the members, pointing out the positive aspects and their teacher wellbeing contributions and, also, negative aspects and suggestions to the Program improvement. 3- (Re)application of the ISSL, from Lipp (2002).

Source: Developed by the author.

* The Adult Stress Symptoms Inventory (ISSL) based itself on the triple phased model developed by Selye (alert, resistance and exhaustion phases) and, during the patterning period by Lipp (2002), a fourth phase was identified, named as close-to-exhaustion, due to its location betwixt the resistance and the exhaustion phases. The close-to-exhaustion phase is characterized by a person's weakening which he or she is no longer able to adapt or resist to the stressing factor and, as such, illnesses start to set in, although not very acute, as in the exhaustion phase (Lipp, 2002).

V. TEACHER WELLBEING PROMOTION PROGRAM: IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS

The program lasted for three months and was developed in 12 weekly meetings, one-hour-and-a-half-long each, from 17 PM to 18 h 30 PM. Times and days were scheduled according to teacher availability and, also, aiming to comply with the teachers who worked at the school both in the afternoons and in the evenings. The meeting took place in a classroom made available by the school's director and were developed with a methodology which were part of a theme summary to be developed followed by experiences on each theme with group dynamics and yarning circles, according to Table 2.

In the first two meetings, 64 teachers showed up and, from this group, only 16 kept on participating in the program until its conclusion. It is important to highlight that the remaining 48 teachers seemed interested in continuing, however, could not do so due

to time constraints related to their workday ranging amongst various schools and commuting, had no availability to continue on the program.

The teacher's presence, in the meeting, was participative and dynamic, which contributed to the works development satisfactorily and the presented results could be considered as positive, regarding to lowering stress levels, rising the teachers' wellbeing perception according to the evaluations results done in the last meeting.

In the third meeting the Adult Stress Symptoms Inventory (ISSL), from Marilda Lipp (2002) was applied, aiming to identify the teachers' stress levels. This same test was reapplied in the last meeting and its results were as follows:

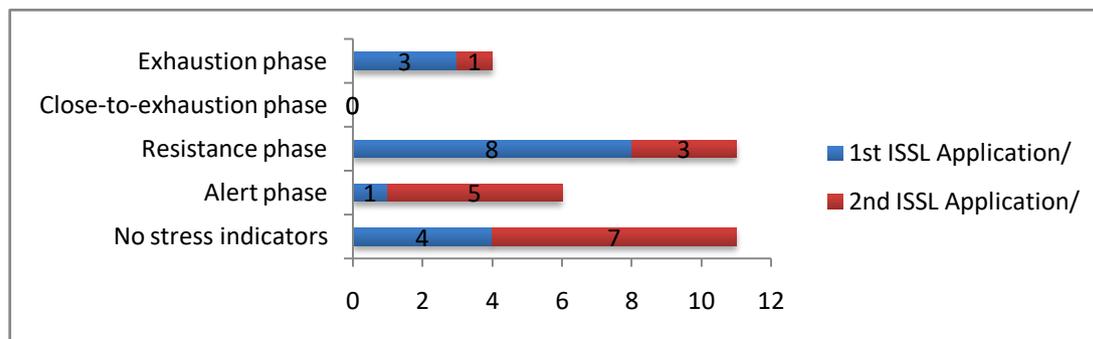
In the first application of the ISSL, of the 16 participating teachers, 4 did not present any stress indicator, 1 presented an alert phase indicator, 8 presented resistance phase indicators, no-one presented close-to-exhaustion indicators and 3 were at

the exhaustion phase, as shown in Graph 1. Most of them (8) present stress in the resistance phase, which occurs with the prolonged presence of the stressing agent, demanding greater adaptation efforts from the body. According to Lipp (2002) it is in this phase that the first psychosomatic signs show up, for example: memory issues, dizziness, constant fatigue, appearance of dermatological problems, general distress, ulcers in the digestive system, excessive irritability, insomnia, sudden humor swings, etc. In the exhaustion phase, there were 3 teachers. In this phase the bodily adaptation tools are depleted, causing the appearance of psychosomatic illnesses. Aside the escalation the resistance phase symptoms, others may manifest: frequent diarrheas, numbness, nervous tics, dread, frequent dizzy spells, extreme appetite swings, night terrors, apathy, excessive tiredness, emotional hyper sensibility, etc. Only a single teacher was in the alert phase, which is the initial stress phase and is

characterized by lesser symptoms, such as muscle strain and pain, rise in respiratory frequency, rise in cardiac frequency, rise in arterial pressure, appetite swings, restlessness, etc. No teacher was in the close-to-exhaustion phase.

Once the identification of that most of the teachers (12) were in some level of stress was made clear, it became evident the need of intervention so as to minimize this state.

After the implementation of the Teacher Wellbeing Promotion Program and with the reapplication of the Adult Stress Symptoms Inventory – ISSL, from Marilda Lipp (2002) in the last meeting, the following result was obtained concerning the stress levels: of the 16 teachers, 7 did not show any stress indicator, 5 show alert phase indicators, 3 show resistance phase indicators, no one in the close-to-exhaustion phase and 1 in the exhaustion phase (Graph 1).



Source: Developed by the author from the research data.

Graph 1: Number of teachers by stress phase in both ISSL applications

Individually comparing the first and second results of the ISSL application, the following results are reached:

Of the 3 teachers that in the first ISSL application presented exhaustion phase indicators, 1 regressed to the resistance phase, 1 to the alert phase and 1 kept on presenting exhaustion phase indicators.

Of the 8 teachers that in the first ISSL application presented resistance phase indicators, in the second applications, by the end of the program, 2 did not present stress indicators any longer, 4 regressed to the alert phase and 2 kept on presenting resistance phase indicators.

In the alert phase, which is the initial stress phase, there was only 1 teacher in said phase in the first ISSL application, who did not present any stress indicators in the second application. Of the 5 teachers that were in the alert phase in the second application, 4 regressed to the resistance phase and 1 to the exhaustion phase.

The comparison of the teacher stress level evolution, between the first and second ISSL application, becomes cleared in Table 2.



Table 2: Individual evolution of the teacher stress level of the teachers of the 1st and 2nd ISSL Application.

1st ISSL Application		2nd ISSL Application	
Stress phase	# of Teachers	Stress phase	# of Teachers
No stress indicators	4	No stress indicators	7
Alert phase	1		
Resistance phase	2		
Resistance phase	4	Alert phase	5
Exhaustion phase	1		
Resistance phase	2	Resistance phase	3
Exhaustion phase	1		
Close-to-exhaustion phase	0	Close-to-exhaustion phase	0
Exhaustion phase	1	Exhaustion phase	1

Source: Developed by the author from the research data.

With these results at hand it can be affirmed that there was a stress level reduction to the participation teachers in the Wellbeing Promotion Program.

With the analysis of the letter the teachers had written to themselves being performed, answering the letter (Letter to Oneself) they had written in the third meeting, it can be noted that the program aided said teacher to identify their distress symptoms and their causes, to create strategies to overcome the everyday work difficulties, to take measures to balance private and professional life, to manage students' (in) discipline situations in the classroom adequately. In the unanimous opinions of all 16 teachers, the Program contributed to the improvement of quality of life and work they perform and that the exercises, especially the ones involving the sharing of professional experiences (and problematic situations) with their colleagues, were of paramount contribution to improve coexistence and school environment.

In the Yarning Circle, also performed in the last meeting to evaluate the Program, aside from reaffirming the positive aspects of the program, teachers suggested that the program could be expanded, because they felt that more time to go deeper into detailed discussions of certain items, such the leadership issue and the emotional intelligence.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Considering teacher distress reflects not only upon teachers but also in the student learning process, in the successful implementation of innovative practices and in the education quality and, also considering that the continuous formation programs can be a form of preparing teachers to the needed adaptations against the transformations which society and schools are going through, the teacher wellbeing promotion program application described in the present article can present itself in a tool to be utilized in a more systematical and frequent in schools.

From the experiencing of this Program it was possible to identify relevant aspects so to a continuous

formation can contribute to teacher in a way of aiding them in the development of coping strategies to the work adversities and, mainly, so they can be more able to achieve and overcome insecurities, fear, deconstructions and constructions inherent to the demands of the contemporary schools.

Once with the obtained results it can be affirmed that there was a meaningful decrease of professional stress and an increase in the perception of teacher wellbeing. This result is similar to what was posited by Jesus (1998, 2006, 2007), Thiele (2009), Sampaio et al (2012), who applied similar programs in Portugal and Brazil, resulting in the acquisition, by the teachers, in distress coping strategies, as well as the absence of stress indicators.

After the program's final evaluation, performed in the last meeting, it was possible to identify the effects of the experienced activities about their wellbeing and their work. The teachers reported, as the main positive effects of the program, to be feeling calmer and more patient to deal with students, managing to, this way, a better classroom management and a more positive relationship with their group; to be more willing to perform differentiated teaching activities and to be feeling closer to coworkers/teachers, which created an easy sharing of ideas and mutual support. They reported, still, to have achieved an improvement in their quality of life and an improvement in the balance of their personal life and professional life.

In the last meeting it was also performed a (re)application of the Adult Stress Symptoms Inventory (ISSL), from Marilda Lipp (2002), and it was verified that, with the results, the regression of the initial teacher stress levels had decreased to less serious levels.

No negative effects were presented, but the teachers showed the need of a program of a longer duration, which would deepen certain themes worked in the program.

These results support the importance of the performance of continuous formation programs, regarding the educator wellbeing and the teacher preparedness so that they are able to adapt to needs in

their practice and ways of being in the profession. It is important, also, so that the teachers are able to develop coping strategies against teaching work adversities and to be strengthened and able to overcome insecurities, fear, deconstructions and constructions inherent to demands and challenges present in contemporary school.

It is considered that the performed study brings a relevant contribution to the education field, offering a range of options to be explored, so to contribute with the initial and continuous formations and with the teacher practices in various spheres and, also, in the development of actions that promote learning and teacher wellbeing, preparing them to the building of an innovative and creative education.

It is believed that the results of the current research can contribute to a greater understanding of the needs and improvements related to teacher formation, which must extend itself beyond technical-scientific issues and offer, also, aid that contribute to the strengthening and teacher wellbeing, seen that these are essential aspects to the creation of innovative and coherent teaching practices to the needs faced by teachers and by education at large, by the contemporary society.

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