THE WELLBEING OF FL TEACHERS: CURRENT CHALLENGES

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- a) current theoretical and empirical research on teacher wellbeing: state of the matter;
- b) the wellbeing of in-service FL teachers in the light of the unique nature of the very processes of language teaching and learning;
- c) wellbeing in the training of pre-service FL teachers

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A STUDY OF THE WELLBEING OF LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CHALLENGES POSED BY PLURILINGUALISM AND MULTICULTURAL CLASSROOMS
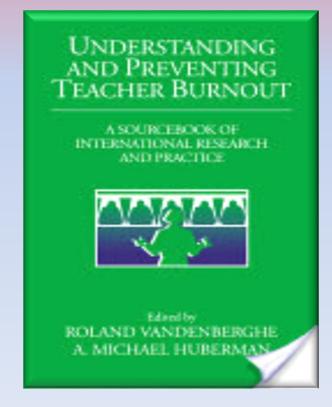
ACRONYM:

GRAN-BRIDGE

- Vandenberghe, R. & A. M. Huberman, (1999). *Understanding and preventing teacher burnout: a source of international research and practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Teaching…

- a cooperative task

- governed by a culture of inquiry

- school becomes the locus of ongoing professional learning.

'the nurturing of an ethos of caring'

(both toward students and staff, that should be collectively pursued)

- Language learning is a profoundly unsettling psychological experience that forces the learner to develop a 'new identity' and new ways of perceiving and describing the world, likely to threaten the learner self-concept and self-expression (Guiora 1983; Horwitz et al 1986).

- *What about the introverts? How should we help them participate? It is always the same students who are participating. But the introverts are not gaining advantage from oral communication. We must consider that they are adolescents. This period is characterized by insecurities, relationship with peers [...] some tend to laugh at others... Speaking causes a lot of anxiety in many students.*

The wellbeing of in-service FL teachers

Multidimensional model for measuring wellbeing (Van Horn, Taris, Schaufeli, & Schreurs (2002)

a) Affective component

b) Professional wellbeing

c) Social well-being (behaviour)

d) Cognitive weariness

e) Psychosomatic complaints and symptoms.

- **AGE**
- **YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE**
- **STATUS**
- **TYPE OF SCHOOL**
- **COURSES TAUGHT**
- **DEGREE/S**

- Factors pertaining to own practice that contribute to professional satisfaction (at present and throughout their career);

- Factors generating discomfort or frustration

- Factors hindering your work and performance that should be improved

- Aspects in your working environment that should be improved

- Does your job influence in a positive or negative manner your personal wellbeing? In what ways?

- What would you need to feel professionally fulfilled?

- What measures are you taking to fulfil those needs?

- If given the chance, what would you require from the educational administrators?

- If your current circumstances at work remain unaltered, how do you imagine yourself in a few years regarding both professional and personal wellbeing?

Factors contributing to personal satisfaction

1. Students

- Students' progress (they are able to communicate, you can see their improvement…)
- Empathy, good relations with students, students motivated to learn
- The acknowledgement on the part of students of their own work (when they report understanding the teacher, praise their English)
- Passing on knowledge of a language that they master and seeing how some students enjoy acquiring that knowledge
- Being in contact with young people (although it is a difficult age, they transmit happiness and energy). It is a key period of life and you can deal with many values.

Factors contributing to personal satisfaction

2. **Good functioning of school community and teamwork**

- Good atmosphere at work
- Acknowledgment on the part of parents and peers

3. Personal and professional development

- Empathy with people acquired throughout career (getting to understand people better)

- Managing ICT and mastering new methodologies

- Good results obtained by students in external examinations

Factors generating discomfort or frustration

1. Students

- Lack of effort and interest in the FL on the part of some students (lack of motivation)
- Problems with discipline and "difficult" students   **CRITICAL INCIDENTS**

2. Organization and administration issues

- Large classes, 32 or 33 students (very difficult to conduct communicative tasks, difficult to participate, teachers feel frustrated)

3. School community

- Lack of acknowledgment on the part of parents and peers, but also administration.
- Hostile work environment
- Not being supported by peers and management team
- Being left out when making decisions
- Parents overprotecting their children and not being objective: "My son tells the truth"

Aspects that should be improved

- Large classes
- More hours of English per week
- Excessive bureaucracy
- Classes with disruptive and unmotivated students.
- Involvement of parents in children's education
- Cooperation with mother language teachers and teamwork
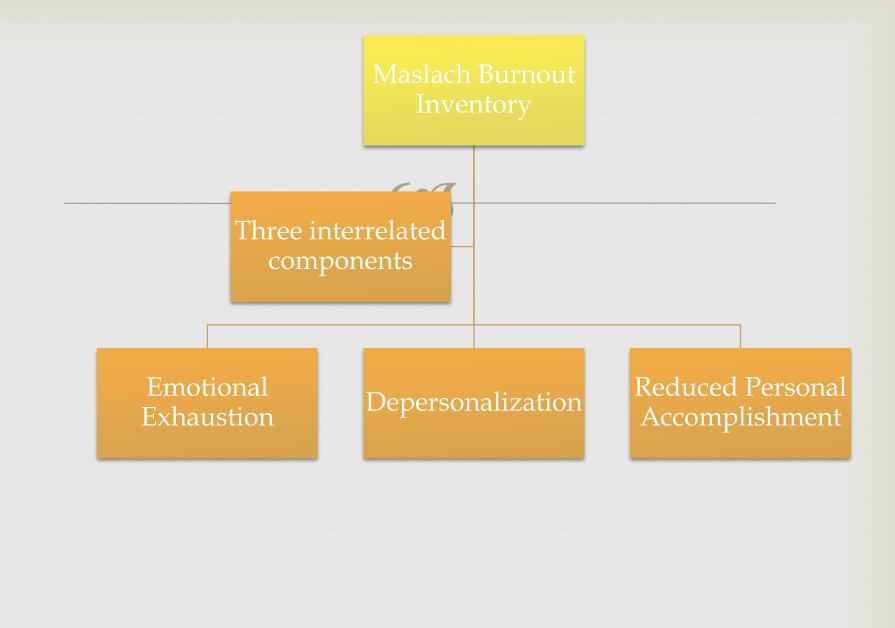- Language courses (preferably in the target countries)

What should be done in order to foster the (future) wellbeing of teacher students?

- Enhancement of self-efficacy
- Components of wellbeing itemized by Van Horn *et al.*
- Providing a holistic training in order to ensure prospective teachers' professional wellbeing
- Empowering prospective teachers by helping them acquire reflective skills and classroom research strategies
- Encourage them to join professional networks

Maslach Burnout Inventory

- *Emotional exhaustion*: Associated to feelings of being emotionally overextended and depleted in one's emotional resources.

- *Depersonalization*: Referring to a negative or excessively detached response to the recipients of one's service or care.

- *Reduced personal accomplishment*: Related to a decline in one's feelings of competence and successful achievement in one's work.

ᔕ "Wellbeing expresses a positive emotional state, which is the result of harmony between the sum of specific environmental factors on the one hand and the personal needs and expectations of teachers on the other" (Aelterman et al.: 2).

Hammadou & Bernhardt

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- *The nature of the subject matter itself.*
- *The interaction patterns necessary to provide instruction.*
- *The challenge for teachers of increasing their knowledge of the subject.*
- *Isolation.*
- *The need for outside support for learning the subject.*

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 Principal outcomes from the in-service teachers groups:
  English language teaching methodology is more progressive than other subjects.
  Incorrect learner output in language teaching is more acceptable.
  Language teachers are compared to native speakers.
  Oral production plays a central role.
  The subject matter of language teaching is harder to define.
  The low status of the praxis

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 Principal outcomes from the pre-service teachers groups:

 "Teaching the culture behind the language".

 "During language classes students often have to talk about their own experiences, their life".