

TEACHER BURNOUT (14 JANUARY 2012, ATHENS)

Mental psychological and physical exhaustion of teachers.

Reasons, approaches and strategies of coping with teacher burnout in order to create an authentic, functional educational environment.

<More than discipline problems and a lack of excitement at work, I think that teachers burn out because they feel under appreciated. We work hard, and if that hard work is not recognized by the students, the parents, or the administration, there really isn't much reason to continue working hard>. S. Borkgren

A PART

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1.KEY WORDS

Stress,intensification,l ack of professional satisfaction,distracton of attention,low involvement in the educational process,desire to abandon the job.

2.SYMPTOMS

Insecurity,phobias,lack of energy,sorrow, disappointment,loss of meaning, guilt-self accusations,

Feelings of inadequacy/incompetence/failure, use of ineffective methods of teaching and communication in class.

3.RESULTS

Loss of control, low self-esteem, losing face, collapse, quitting, getting fired.

4.DEFINITIONS

A.Syndrome resulting from teacher's inability to protect themselves against threats to their self esteem and well-being(Haberman)

B.An extreme type of role-specific alienation with a focus on feelings of meaninglessness, especially as this applies to one's ability to successfully reach students.(Wood,McCarthy 2000)

C.From a psychological point of view,stress or strain results from subjectively weighting on the one hand the demands that are made by the job and the circumstances in which the job has to

be done, and on the other hand the available resources one is willing to put in the job(Boehr and Newman,1978;French,1973).

ACTIVITY

Discuss in your team which definition you find more apposite-why?

Alternatively, create your own definition.

5.CAUSES-CONDITIONS-RELATION TO STYLE OF TEACHING,TEACHER PERSONALITY AND OTHER PARAMETERS.

-Teacher-centered /student-centered

-Exam- orientated/knowledge-orientated

-emphasis on the product

-emphasis on the process

Introversion, perfectionism, feeling of inferiority, general predisposition towards stress.

6.STRATEGIES- indicative tips found on the internet and in bibliography

-don't sweat the small stuff

-don't carry home the psychology of the teacher

-devote time to yourself

-make careful lesson plans

-take part in educational seminars

-use new technology-various tools/methods

-have high expectations

-think constructively ,positively

-ask for help

-be sensitive

-deal with time management/setting of priorities

7.CRITICAL REVIEW

How do you evaluate these tips?Discussion

(It was mentioned that though not bad,these tips tend to approach the issue in a rather limited , fragmented way leaving out the main factors that is -teacher's values,goals,self-awareness ect.)

8.SOME STATISTICS/ DATA -IS STRESS HELPFUL SOMETIMES? DEGREES-DISCRIMINATION

Questions

-Are male or female teachers more likely to experience burnout?

-Are primary or secondary education teachers those most in danger?

-do age and experience make a difference?

(research data inconclusive)

Research shows that a certain degree of stress is conducive to performance, while stress exceeding a certain limit (assessed by means of both subjective and objective criteria)reduces /annihilates performance.

Terms:eu-stress/distress

9A.ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

HOW VALUES EDUCATION CREATES A FRAME WHICH CONTRIBUTES TO COMMUNICATION, LEARNING,GROWTH, AND PROTECTS THE TEACHER AGAINST EXHAUSTION AND INEFFECTIVENESS.

10.GENERAL REVIEW-

AWARENESS-SELF-PROTECTION-EFFECTIVENESS

B PART

Below there is a list with several parameters related to teacher burnout 1.personal 2.general

1.EXPERIENCE

AGE/GENDER

TYPE OF PERSONALITY

PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

VALUES SYSTEM

REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE TEACHING PROFESSION

PHYSICAL CONDITION-EMOTIONAL STABILITY

NETWORK OF FRIENDS

NETWORK OF COLLEAGUES

2.GOALS OF EDUCATION

SCHOOL ATMOSPHERE /ETHOS

ADMINISTRATION/DUTIES

NUMBER OF STUDENTS PER CLASS

PLACEMENT OF THE LESSON IN THE CURRICULUM

LOAD OF WORK

ACTIVITY

How do you rate the above parameters in regard with their degree of contribution to teacher burnout?

ACTIVITY

Perhaps in the past, you have experienced feelings of exhaustion, stress, disappointment which while not bringing you to a state of collapse, led you to a dysfunctional management of the educational setting.

What, who helped you get over this situation?

Share your emotions and general experience with members of your team.

9B.IN WHICH WAYS DOES VALUES EDUCATION CONTRIBUTE TO THE CREATION OF A CLIMATE FULL OF RESPECT, AUTHENTIC COMMUNICATION AND LEARNING AND PROTECT THE TEACHER AGAINST EXHAUSTION?

1.AWARENESS OF TEACHER VALUES

ACTIVITY.

Write three important personal values , think and note down how you put them into practice both in school and out of school.

2.MAINTAINANCE OF SELF-ESTEEM IN AND OUT OF SCHOOL.

ACTIVITY.

Write a letter to yourself, mentioning the people, things, activities that nurture you outside school.Confess who or which people/ situations hurt or drain you.

3.CREATION OF CONDITIONS THAT PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF POSITIVE INTERACTION BETWEEN STUDENTS AND THE TEACHER.

- negotiative /collaborative creation of rules
- awareness of the needs of the students in one's setting
- high but realistic goals
- proper use of language/body language awareness
- watching out for <self-fulfilling prophesy>
- creation of team spirit
- use of open questions
- provision for lessons focused on process
- active listening
- conflict resolution strategies
- humour-positive attitude

- acceptance of mistakes
- awareness of the messages the teacher gives
- consistency-stability
- justice
- flexibility
- discipline management-consequences
- anger management through its understanding(anger is not a primary emotion)
- awareness of personal limits-preventing/dealing with explosive situations
- use of circle time
- self-check notebook
- communication with parents

4.CONSCIOUS EMBODIMENT OF VALUES LESSONS IN THE SCHOOL PROGRAMME

-5.SUPPORT NETWORK OF COLLEAGUES

UNIVERSAL VALUES THAT CONSIST THE CORE OF THE VALUES EDUCATION PROGRAMME.

PEACE,RESPECT,LOVE,TOLERANCE,HONESTY,HUMILITY,CO-OPERATION,HAPPINESS,RESPONSIBILITY,SIMPLICITY,FREEDOM.UNITY.

ACTIVITY.

Write individually

- three things that are your biggest fears at school
- three things that you enjoy in class/school
- three personal motives to go on being teachers.

If you wish, share them with your group.

The importance of self reflection.

My self protection is based on the awareness of my daily goals, beliefs and limitations.

I spend (on a daily basis) 10-15 minutes to focus on my own centre, body and spirit and gradually develop my ability to concentrate on things important to me.

(Here ,Susan got all of us involved in a beautiful visualization that she had prepared specifically for the seminar and which she is going to send.)

EFFECTIVENESS

When I have awareness of my values,abilities,limitations and goals,I use the means that I have at my disposal with proper orientation,force and distribution/management ,so that there is a balance between my purpose and the achieved results

GENERAL REVIEW

<Some teachers overestimate their stressors and strains and should be more realistic when comparing themselves with other professionals.They probably underestimate the impact they still have on the learning process and the personal development of the children in their class.It is true that the status of their job has decreased in the society, but that did not start recently and it is true for many other jobs too-such as medicine and law.

<Teachers are made for teaching ,and teaching shall they do>That means, however ,that as a group,they should also be much more involved in developing and evaluating educational programs and reforms.They should feel like origins not like pawns,not only in their class but in the school system at large>.

(Willy Lens&Neves de Jesus)

(As a last activity , each participant shared a personal feeling experienced during the seminar and expressed a commitment for the future)

You can't prepare your students

To build the world of their dreams tomorrow,

If you don't believe in your own dreams now;

You can't prepare them for life,

If you don't believe in it yourself;

You can't show the way

If you are stationary, tired and disheartened,

At a crossroads.

Celestin Freinet-<Tutor of Adolescents>

Taken from living Values Educators' kit(LVEP Educator Training Guide,p.133)