

# Chapter 7

## ‘Positive Education’: A Professional Learning Programme to Foster Teachers’ Resilience and Well-Being



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**Abstract** Professional learning can make a significant contribution to teachers’ resilience and well-being. This chapter reports the implementation of a professional learning programme focused on resilience and well-being, targeting 35 in-service Portuguese teachers, mostly working in middle and secondary education. The ‘Positive Education’ programme was adapted from the European project ENTREE (ENhancing Teachers RESilience in Europe) and encompasses six training modules: 1—Resilience; 2—Building Relationships; 3—Emotional Well-Being; 4—Stress Management; 5—Effective Teaching; 6—Classroom Management, and an additional module named ‘Education for Well-Being’. The concepts and topics for each module will be discussed, along with the design and implementation of the strategies followed to promote a positive, collaborative and reflexive environment (e.g. wellness activities, stress relief and work–life balance). This chapter also describes the main effects of the training programme on participants, gathered through interviews at the end of the training sessions.

**Keywords** Resilience · Teacher professional learning · Teacher well-being · Resilience programme

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The original version of this chapter was revised: Error in link has been corrected as “<http://www.entree-online.eu/>”. The correction to this chapter is available at [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-5963-1\\_19](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-5963-1_19)

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## 7.1 Introduction

A number of studies have shown that resilience correlates positively with teachers' well-being (Brouskeli et al. 2018; Pretsch et al. 2012; Svence and Majors 2015). Resilience is a predictor of job satisfaction and well-being among teachers and can act as a protective factor against the negative costs of the teaching profession (Pretsch et al. 2012), such as teacher stress, burnout and teacher intention to leave the profession (Flores 2018; Patrão et al. 2012; Pocinho and Perestrelo 2011). Resilience is conceptualised as a process (Mansfield et al. 2016), in the sense that it can be fostered amongst teachers in order to sustain their well-being and commitment to teaching profession and quality in educational settings (Day et al. 2007). Moreover, it can be nurtured through initial and in-service professional learning. The most widely recognised formal procedures that have been found to foster teacher resilience incorporate teacher learning and development workshops and coaching by experienced and senior teachers (Richter et al. 2013; Smith and Ingersoll 2004).

Resilience is seen as a construct that can be nurtured and developed (e.g. Beltman et al. 2018; Mansfield et al. 2016). To foster teachers' resilience, Benard (2003) suggests that they need professional development opportunities, resources and materials, caring collegial relationships and opportunities for shared decision-making and planning. Teachers' resilience should be nurtured and supported within the school, and the school administration plays an important role in building and sustaining resilience (e.g. Day and Hong 2016; Leroux 2018). Many studies suggest that teacher education programmes have a key role to play in preparing teachers for the challenges they face—for example, by developing their skills in collaboration, problem-solving, managing stress and efficacy-building experiences (Durksen et al. 2017; Mansfield et al. 2014; Silva et al. 2018). Developing a broader range of skills and strategies, along with curriculum and pedagogical knowledge, enables teachers to feel better equipped to meet the challenges of their work. Opportunities for professional development (Greenfield 2015) can be both formal (e.g. training workshops) and informal (e.g. seeking advice from a more experienced colleague). The relevance of teacher professional learning programmes and the existence of communities of practice is emphasised in some studies, highlighting its contribution to teachers' resilience and well-being (Clarà 2017; Raider-Roth et al. 2012).

Contributing to the existing research on teacher's professional development and learning, this chapter reports the results of the implementation of a teacher training programme on resilience and well-being. This programme, called 'Positive Education', is a face-to-face training aiming to enhance teachers' resilience and well-being. The programme comprised seven modules and activities intended to help in-service teachers to apply and adapt strategies to promote resilience and well-being in their own specific pedagogical context. Teacher educators may find the modules' description particularly useful in informing their own teacher training programmes. Professionals engaged in in-service teacher professional learning may choose to focus on the more practical, in-class applications.

## 7.2 Rationale and Goals of the 'Positive Education' Programme

The professional learning programme 'Positive Education' was adapted from the European programme ENTREE (ENhancing Teachers REsilience in Europe; <http://www.entree-online.eu/>; Silva et al. 2018) (see also Chap. 1) and aimed to foster resilience and well-being among middle and secondary school teachers. The training programme consisted of six training modules from ENTREE: Resilience, Building Relationships, Emotional Well-Being, Stress Management, Effective Teaching, Classroom Management and a new module called Education for Well-Being.

One of the main focuses of the Education for Well-Being module was to develop the ability to foster positive emotions in oneself and others. This objective is based on Barbara Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson 1998, 2004). The theory posits that through broadening attention and thinking, positive emotions can create opportunities to build new, or reinforce existing, mental, psychological and social resources. These new resources and repertoires of action emerge as a result of patterns of thinking that are more open to information, more integrative and more flexible, created by the experience of positive emotions. Longitudinal research based on the broaden-and-build theory shows that daily experiences of positive emotions predict broadened coping resources and greater trait resiliency, self-efficacy beliefs, more self-control and future-oriented time-thinking, interpersonal trust and social connectedness (see Fredrickson 2013 for a review of evidence). Following the theory, all these increments of psychological functioning increase opportunities for future experience of positive emotions, giving way to positive emotion's reciprocal and sequential effects (Garland et al. 2010).

The education for well-being module was operationalised based on different dimensions of the concept of well-being, following the Positive Education perspective and Seligman's (2011) PERMA model, which emphasises P—Positive Emotion (feeling good, positive emotions, optimism, pleasure and enjoyment); E—Engagement (fulfilling work, interesting hobbies, flow); R—Relationships (social connections, love, intimacy, emotional and physical interaction); M—Meaning (having a purpose, finding a meaning in life); A—Accomplishments (ambition, realistic goals, important achievements, pride in yourself). The well-being module allows an emphasis on the well-being construct and associated variables. This module was the initial one, introducing the whole formation. It had an interactive nature that allowed for adaptation of the other modules of the training, the schedule, the time load and associated dynamics, aiming to bring the specific training needs of teachers to the reality of the training program. Moreover, the theme of 'Education for Well-Being' can contextualise the promotion of resilience skills, which makes this module the core module of the training programme, structuring the formative dynamics. On the other hand, all of the modules included topics linked to the central module. Thus, there was a constant synergy and interconnection between the different modules and the core, 'Education for Well-Being'. The objective was to make the programme

coherent, aiming to improve the professional practices of the participating teachers through a joint, consistent and interconnected reflection.

While conceptualising the training programme, the elements of three subsystems (the teacher, the school and the learning activities) were taken into account (Opfer and Pedder 2011), attending to the reciprocal influences of these three subsystems on the professional learning of each trainee. The methodological approach followed in the Positive Education programme sought to find strategies and content that took into account the interactions of these three subsystems. There was thus a logic of systemic approach between the subject (the teacher, with all of their present and past experiences and beliefs), the process (learning activities that take into account the subject and its context), the context (the school, with the different experiences it provides) and the product (teacher learning). Thus, trainees took their experiences and beliefs into their learning and this ecological view of promoting resilience in teachers was the guiding principle when designing the module content and activities.

The methodology used in the Positive Education programme brings together the key points of a teacher training programme (Avalos 2011; Darling-Hammond 2006; Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin 1995; Engeström and Kerosuo 2007; Kim and Hannafin 2008; Korthagen 2001; Lave 1993; Lave and Wenger 1991; Turunen and Tuovila 2012), namely:

1. Teacher learning conceived as the product of the learner's interaction with contexts, and professional learning is anchored in sociocultural contexts of collegial work and professional growth which occurs through social interaction;
2. Coherence between theory and practice, focusing on practice as a source of learning;
3. A grounded curriculum whereby the training was structured in a dynamic modular organisation, in which the nuclear module (Education for Well-Being) was the framework of all the others and with which all interrelated;
4. Training based on and adjusted to the real experiences and needs of the trainees, through interactive dynamics;
5. A training approach based on case studies. The sessions provide situational and authentic learning possibilities and promote the application of conceptual tools to real-world situations, through an individual or joint reflection, contextualised to their practices and beliefs;
6. Partnerships between universities and schools that enabled the participation of teachers from various schools of the municipality and of various levels of education, given the credibility that this partnership brings to the training programme.

### **7.3 Design and Implementation of the Training Modules**

Six modules (resilience, relationships, well-being, stress and coping, effective teaching and classroom management) and education for well-being as a nuclear module were developed to reflect the whole spectrum of 'teacher resilience' as

outlined in the theoretical framework. Teachers were enrolled in the programme in two sessions presenting the programme to the teachers’ community of schools in one municipality of the Lisbon region. In these sessions, a general overview of the programme and the main goals were presented. Afterwards, teachers who were interested in attending the training programme filled out a form and were contacted to participate in the programme by being included in the first group of training ( $n = 17$ ). A second group ( $n = 18$ ) was organised with some of the participants who were not able to participate in the first group, and some other teachers invited by participants in the first group. Both groups participated in the 18-h professional learning programme, consisting of nine sessions of 2 h each, once a week.

The training programme is structured in a dynamic modular way, in which the nuclear module (education for well-being) frames all the others, acting as a centraliser and maintaining relationships with all modules (Fig. 7.1). Education for Well-Being thus contextualises the promotion of teachers’ resilience skills.

This training model allows a curricular flexibility in the management of the different modules, adapting them to the actual needs and practices of the participating teachers. The training sessions fit the Positive Education paradigm (e.g. Norrish et al. 2013; White 2016) and the Realistic Teacher Training Model (e.g. Korthagen 2001; Korthagen et al. 2013) in a collaborative, participatory and reflective context, with the prevalence of theoretical–practical activities promoting well-being competences (e.g. flourishing, increased potential and human virtues) and resilience (e.g. emotional, social, relational, motivational and professional). Grounded in the Positive Education paradigm, the several methodological strategies used seek to enhance the well-being of participating teachers, focusing on the development of positive emotions, good

**Fig. 7.1** Dynamic modular model of “Positive Education” teacher training programme



relationships, satisfaction, hope, optimism, flow and happiness. The proposed activities lead to dynamic workshops where teachers recognise their main virtues and the importance of developing them to achieve holistic well-being. Some of the personal strengths developed are empathy, creativity, kindness and resilience, among others.

The realistic model of teacher education is also directly related to Positive Education, taking into account that what Korthagen (2001) designates as core qualities are the character strengths of positive psychology, which were developed in this training. We thus focused on constantly valuing the human educational potential (reinforcing the best in each participant) and investing in their psychological capital. In addition, we intended that these positive traits would lead teachers to face life in a more positive, resilient and balanced way.

The choice of delivering the training through workshops was framed by the Realistic Model characteristics, namely focusing on school contexts and teachers' practices, and on a problem-solving orientation in schools. The workshop sessions took place using concrete examples from the participant teachers, and the joint reflections allowed participants to achieve conclusive solutions based on the experiential reality of each one.

One of the researchers, who is a teacher and has experience in teacher training, acted as a learning facilitator. During the sessions, teachers were encouraged to work and discuss their own experiences through individual or joint reflection, contextualised to their beliefs and practices, with the specific goals of developing relationships between peers, and collaborative and teamwork skills. The workshops started with a brief motivation activity facilitated by the trainer or by a guest. This methodology allowed the training to play as an open system, with the participation of several well-being dynamics facilitators (e.g. meditation, relaxation, mindfulness), whose practical approaches helped participants regain their vitality as the sessions took place in the post-work period, between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. These activities not only aimed to stimulate and motivate the trainees at the beginning of the training sessions, allowing for a broader understanding of the later theoretical content, but also served as examples of motivation strategies that could be applied later to their students. Throughout the sessions, there was also a concern to adapt the verbal communication of the trainer to the target audience, using a 'language of education' and not only of psychology. At the end of the activities and discussion/reflection, a theoretical systematisation of ideas and concepts was made, mainly through presentations based on the theoretical framework underlying ENTREE and using the materials previously developed in this European project (Silva et al. 2018).

The training modules were presented in a sequence that sought to follow the personal and professional needs/motivations of the participating teachers, namely:

1. Nuclear Module: Education for Well-Being (2 sessions);
2. Emotional Well-Being (2 sessions);
3. Resilience (2 sessions);
4. Building Relationships (1 session);
5. Stress Management (1 session);
6. Effective Teaching and Classroom Management (1 session).

Participants were informed that they would not get any credit units for participating in the training and that if they had attended the training sessions, they would get a certificate of participation. The participating teachers were very experienced, and therefore the 'Effective Teaching' and 'Classroom Management' modules were merged and addressed in a single session. The following tables describe the contents covered in the training sessions.

## 7.4 Overview of the Training Modules

See Tables 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5 and 7.6.

**Table 7.1** Overview of the module 'Education for well-being'

Module	Education for well-being
Duration	4 h (2 sessions)
Goals	<p>Framed by the Positive Education theoretical framework, the main objectives of this module were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become aware of a more adaptive way of life with the presence of emotions such as positive mood, hope, resilience and optimism;</li> <li>• Know and apply positive education tools, operationalising behaviours in this sense;</li> <li>• Act as positive transforming educators from the perspective of an integrative well-being (physical, mental, social and spiritual);</li> <li>• Know the main character strengths and human virtues, emphasising personal skills in these domains and applying them to teaching</li> </ul>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive (trans)formation: Teachers as Educational Transformers by Positive Education;</li> <li>• Holistic perspective of well-being;</li> <li>• Teacher flourishing: Promotion of virtues and character strengths</li> </ul>

**Table 7.2** Overview of the module 'Resilience'

Module	Resilience
Duration	4 h (2 sessions)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on teachers' knowledge about resilience;</li> <li>• Define the concept of teacher resilience as a multidimensional construct, comprising its micro, meso and macro levels;</li> <li>• Establish the relationship between resilience and quality of teaching and learning;</li> <li>• Know the factors that contribute to teacher resilience (risk and protective factors) and their impact on an individual level;</li> <li>• Explore how teachers can become more resilient</li> </ul>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting teacher resilience;</li> <li>• Risk and protective factors</li> </ul>

**Table 7.3** Overview of the module ‘Building Relationships’

Module	Building relationships
Duration	2 h (1 session)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on the importance of school climate as a risk and protective factor of teacher resilience;</li> <li>• Identify ways to promote a positive school climate;</li> <li>• Understand the importance of support networks (personal and professional) and the construction of educational communities in the school;</li> <li>• Foster collaboration and teamwork as a support factor at school;</li> <li>• Promote effective communication and relationships through the development of relational skills and teacher resilience</li> </ul>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School climate and teacher resilience;</li> <li>• Communication for effective relationships and resilience;</li> <li>• Teacher support networks, relationships and resilience</li> </ul>

**Table 7.4** Overview of the module ‘Emotional well-being’

Module	Emotional well-being
Duration	4 h (2 sessions)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyse the importance of positive emotions in teacher resilience and well-being and use some strategies to promote them;</li> <li>• Understand and identify emotions in others and demonstrate empathy;</li> <li>• Assertively communicate one’s thoughts and emotions;</li> <li>• Use effective communication tools such as reflective listening;</li> <li>• Identify and understand emotions, feelings, strengths and personal challenges;</li> <li>• Use different emotion management strategies to deal with different situations in the school context</li> </ul>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotions; self-awareness and regulation of emotions;</li> <li>• Management and regulation of emotions;</li> <li>• Positive emotions, empathy and assertiveness</li> </ul>

**Table 7.5** Overview of the module ‘Stress management’

Module	Stress management
Duration	2 h (1 session)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on the definition of stress and associated concepts;</li> <li>• Know coping strategies (theoretical and practical support) to deal with stress before, during and after classes;</li> <li>• Understand stress-related aspects of corporeality and how to maintain a good work–life balance;</li> <li>• Learn to deal with stress symptoms associated with teaching (teacher) and learning (students)</li> </ul>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stress management: health, stress and coping</li> </ul>



**Table 7.6** Overview of the modules 'Effective teaching' and 'Classroom management'

Modules	Effective teaching and classroom management
Duration	2 h (1 session)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on the efficacy of planning, teaching and learning;</li> <li>• Develop communicational skills that can contribute to a positive education;</li> <li>• Distinguish between summative and formative assessment, and analyse the importance of formative assessment for learning;</li> <li>• Diagnose and reflect on the personal profile of classroom management;</li> <li>• Know proactive and positive techniques of classroom management (organisation, production of materials, rules and procedures selection) and management of student behaviour/work</li> </ul>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective teaching and learning;</li> <li>• Student work management;</li> <li>• Proactive and positive classroom management strategies</li> </ul>

## 7.5 Evaluation of the Training Modules

### 7.5.1 Participants

The participants were 23 of the 35 teachers from nine different schools who participated in the training, ranging from preschool education (one teacher) to secondary education (nine teachers). Most of them were women (78%) with 26.7 years of teaching (on average) and taught in elementary schools (52%). The 35 teachers were distributed into two groups.

### 7.5.2 Procedure

To evaluate the training programme, a semi-structured interview was conducted with 23 participants from both groups (15 from group 1 and 8 from group 2)<sup>1</sup> who volunteered to be interviewed. They answered questions about (a) the perceived usefulness and applications of the programme; (b) the contributions to their personal and professional lives; (c) the perceived impact on relationships with colleagues, students and others; (d) the impact on resilience and conflict management skills; (e) the pros and cons of the programme and suggested improvements for the programme contents and implementation. Teachers were also asked to evaluate the programme. Each interview lasted between 7 and 20 min. All interviews were transcribed and fully analysed to identify the different ideas proposed by the participants within each question.

<sup>1</sup>Besides this evaluation, the programme was evaluated through the use of measures collected at the beginning and the end of the program and compared to a control group. More information about it can be found in Fernandes et al. (2019).

### 7.5.3 Data Analysis

Interview data were analysed following each major interview question, guided by the procedures usually taken in content analysis to create a coding scheme (Creswell 2012; Krippendorff 2004). Thus, two independent researchers read the interviews iteratively to create categories and sub-categories, discussed and refined them until the final coding scheme was achieved. The different responses were then aggregated into major categories or themes and sub-categories. For each question, the percentages of answers obtained in each category or subcategory were computed, considering the total number of ideas proposed in that category or question. About 25% of the interviews were independently coded by a third rater, and Cohen’s kappa was computed to assure the validity of the coding system ( $\kappa = 0.91$ ).

## 7.6 Results

### 7.6.1 Perceived Usefulness and Application of the Programme

The perceived usefulness of the training was shown by the evaluation of the programme and the question focusing on its perceived usefulness. Regarding the global evaluation of the programme, teachers considered it useful from both a professional and a personal point of view, with applicability to practice and focus on the person being the most referred categories (9 out of 22, 41%, Fig. 7.2). The majority of answers emphasised the programme’s focus on the self and the promotion of positive psychological functioning and balanced emotions:

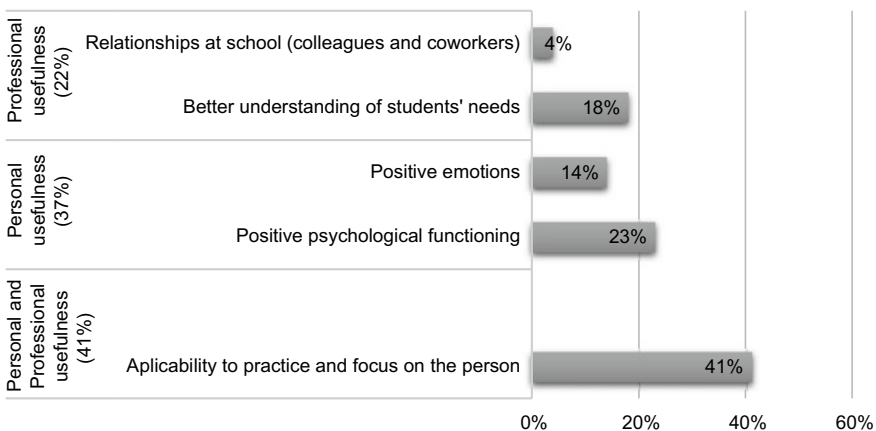


Fig. 7.2 Perceived usefulness of the training programme

- 'In personal and professional terms I thought it was very fruitful because it gave me a new perspective of me as a person';
- 'I'm a little bit stressed, it helped me to pause, to keep calm, to reflect...'

A better understanding of students' needs was also perceived as a major contribution to the training for the professional learning of participants:

- 'I think I've learned to look a little bit more at their (students') individuality, to worry a little bit more if I'm a good teacher at the emotional level as well. To give them more that part also. To hear them more...'

Teachers perceived that they have applied some of the trained skills both at the professional (54%, 29 of the 54 responses) and personal levels (46%, 25 out of 54 answers). At the professional level (Fig. 7.3), the majority of answers focused on more positive pedagogical management skills and professional relationships with colleagues and students:

- 'In the relationship with the students, when there were less pleasant situations, I always tried to devalue a little what could be a bad influence, what could be negative to achieve a certain goal'.
- 'There are always problems that come up, especially in relationships, and I think about what I learned in training and things have been overcome better'.

At the personal level (Fig. 7.4), teachers said they have applied skills mainly to gain greater consciousness about self and emotions:

- 'I have more consciousness of things... I start thinking about it more, where before I just acted without thinking of what I was doing'.
- 'Emotionally, it helped me'.

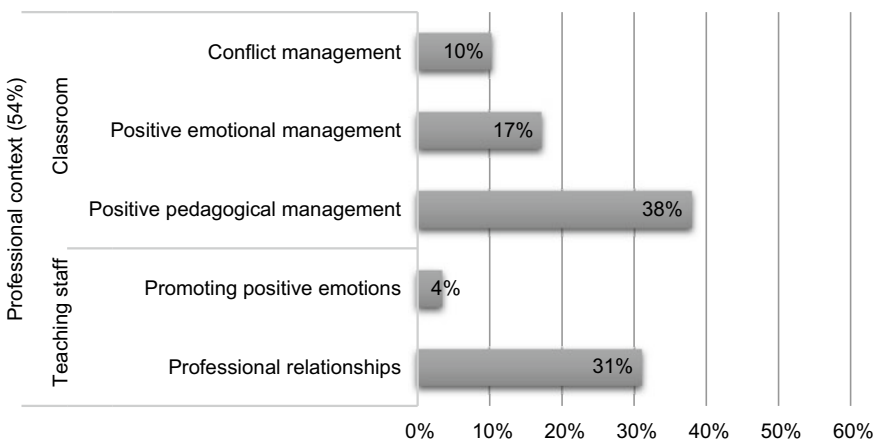
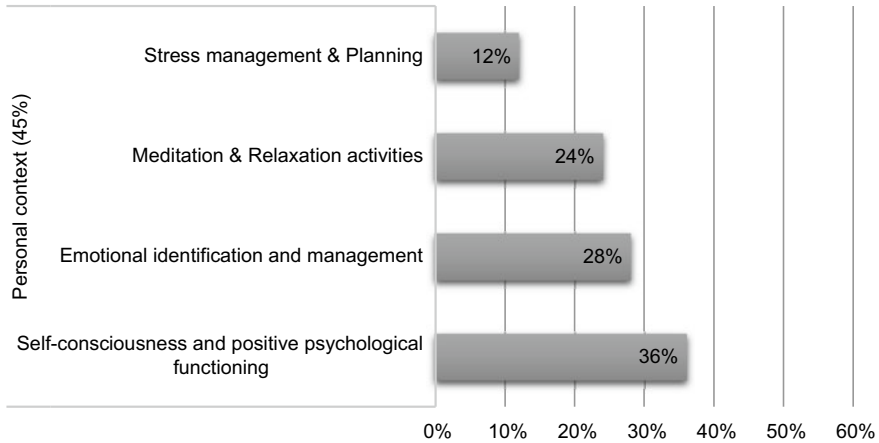


Fig. 7.3 Perceived application of the training programme at the professional level



**Fig. 7.4** Application of the training programme at the personal level

They thought they acted better in difficult situations:

- ‘(...) my ability to stop and not be impulsive in more difficult interaction situations, I recognise this as benefits of this action’.

The data analysis also points out to the introduction of some relaxation or meditation routines onto their daily living

- ‘In the morning I meditate and use those techniques (that we have learned) to carry the energy by visualising a positive thing’.

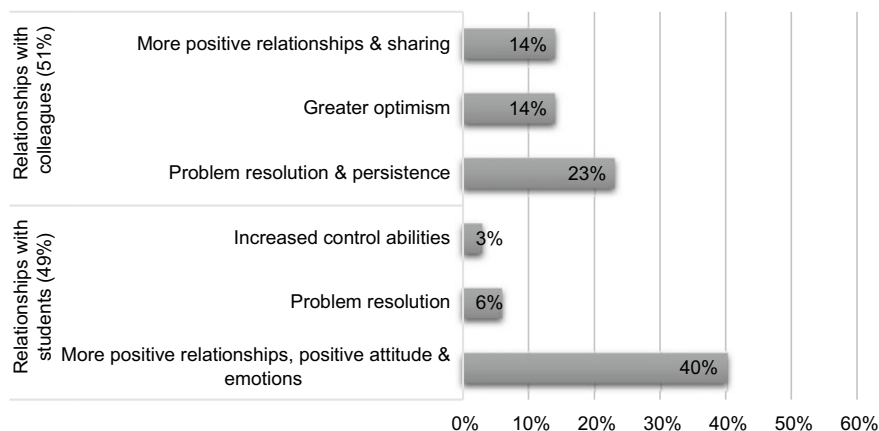
### 7.6.2 *Perceived Impact on Relationships*

The large majority of teachers recognised the positive impact of the programme on relationships with colleagues and students (Fig. 7.5). In fact, only one teacher said he did not notice any change in his relationships with his students; six teachers answered the same about their relationships with co-workers.

The greater impact on students was perceived to be on more positive attitudes towards them (14 answers, 40%), which improved pedagogical relationships:

- ‘I think it interfered more with the kids. (...) I am more loving, calmer with them...’
- ‘(...) I think I started complimenting them a lot more, having a lot more patience, thinking at least about that’.

Relationships with co-workers were also perceived to have been improved (Fig. 7.5). The majority of the 19 answers to this question focused on a greater willingness to



**Fig. 7.5** Perceived impact of the training programme on relationships

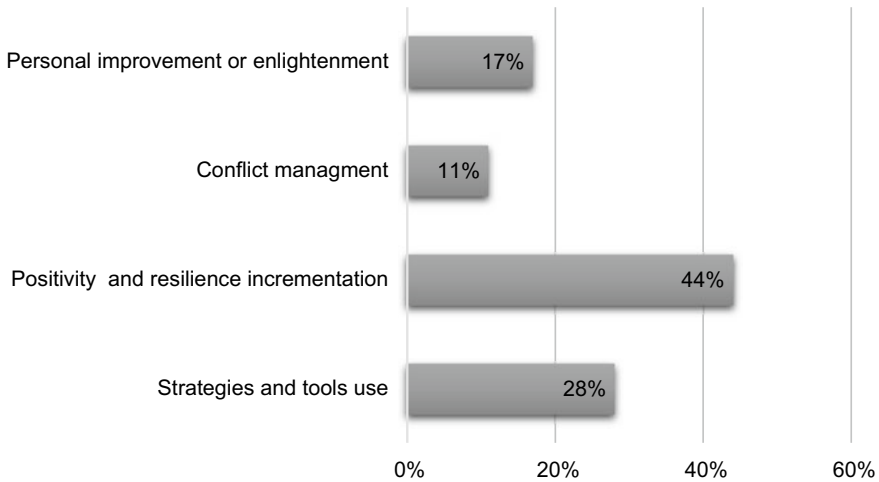
understand others' perspectives and to solve problems, and an increased sense of sharing with colleagues (13 answers, 37%). The following quotes illustrate these gains in relationships:

- '...There are situations when we are down and we have to understand how we can overcome them'.
- '...Gave us a greater awareness of what is happening to others'.
- 'I shared immediately that I was having this training and that it was good for them to do it also', or even reframing situations.
- 'I think it helped me to deconstruct some prejudices, prejudices that I had inside me...'

### ***7.6.3 Perceived Impact on Resilience and Conflict Management Skills***

Teachers stressed that the programme helped them to foster their resilience and conflict management skills (Fig. 7.6). They expressed 18 different ways in which the programme produced this impact. In summary, the experience of positive feelings, of personal empowerment through learning new tools and better conflict management skills, all contributed to resilience improvement:

- 'We are so fortunate, dealing with children, we also learn a lot with them... This course helped me a lot on this too!'
- 'There were complicated times, but the tools (to deal with it) were there'.
- 'My resilience in the school context clearly improved!'



**Fig. 7.6** Perceived impact of the programme on resilience and conflict management skills

#### ***7.6.4 Pros and Cons of the Training Programme***

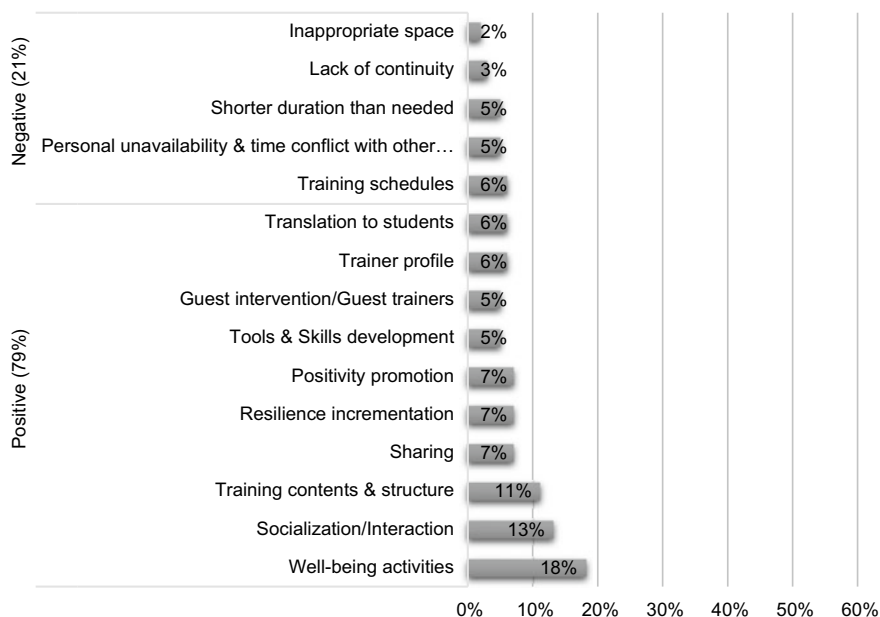
We also asked teachers to point out the pros and cons of the training programme. Figure 7.7 shows the different categories of answers provided for this question. As expected, a large majority of the 61 answers were about the pros of participating in the course (48 responses, 79%). Additionally, positive well-being activities (meditation, relaxation) and positive interactions, sharing ideas with colleagues, and the personal focus contents or the practical approach of the sessions were the most frequently mentioned themes valued by teachers. Examples of these are:

- ‘The more positive... I really enjoyed the relaxation sessions we did’.
- ‘For me it was my therapeutic moment of relaxation’.
- ‘We really experienced things...’.
- ‘I liked having other colleagues sharing experiences’.
- ‘[The programme content was] focused on the person and not on what the person has to know in terms of their scientific field’.

The scheduling of the training sessions at the end of the workday, lack of time available or personal factors which inhibited participants from being present at sessions, comprising 7 of the 13 answers about the course’s least positive features:

- ‘The least positive, clearly, is that it was at the end of a working day’.
- ‘The only thing I noticed is that sometimes I was extremely tired...’.

Five of the remaining replies on the more negative side of the programme mentioned the need for longer sessions and the importance of continuing similar training:



**Fig. 7.7** Pros and cons of the training programme

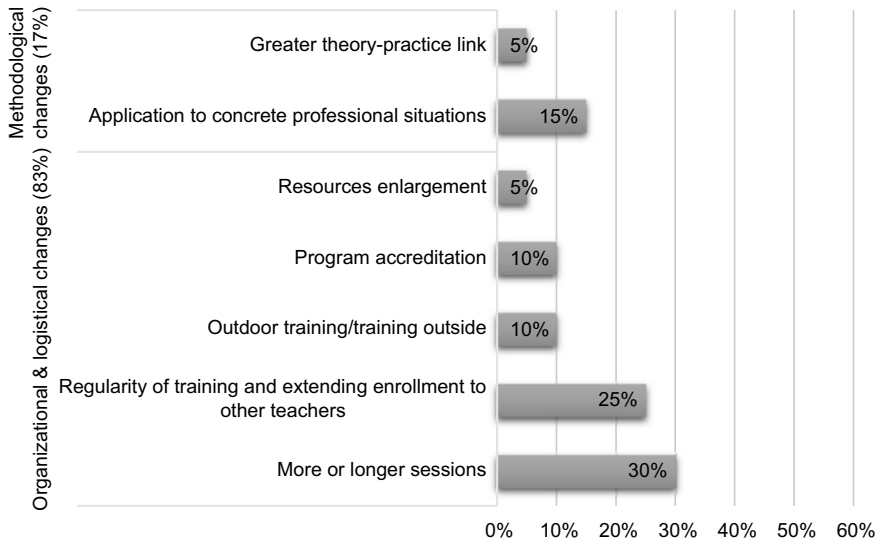
- ‘Sometimes we even needed more time to learn to look deeper into ourselves and our resilience and (to learn) meditation...’
- ‘Lack of continuity (of the course)’.

These last quotes may not be seen as negative in themselves, and they fuelled the suggestions teachers made for the improvement of the programme.

### ***7.6.5 Suggested Improvements for the Training Programme***

Despite 5 of the 25 responses (18%) indicating that no change will be needed, the majority of responses suggested organisational or logistic changes to improve the programme. Figure 7.8 shows the other improvement suggestions made by the teachers interviewed.

As a final question, we also asked if they will recommend the programme, for whom and why. All 23 teachers interviewed recognised that they have or will recommend the programme to other teachers, mainly to ‘those who I find less positive and more closed up’, ‘people very stressed and pessimist’ or ‘I will recommend for some persons that I think the course is “tailor-made” for’. Reasons for recommending the programme include the ‘novelty and freshness of contents’ not connected to



**Fig. 7.8** Suggested improvements for the training programme

the curricula, the ‘active involvement of the trainees’ in the proposed activities and opportunities for personal as well as professional improvement:

- ‘I would say (to do the course) to improve their performance as a teacher as well as a person... the professional part and the emotional part...’
- ‘I would say it is an action focused towards us as persons, that helps us to overcome difficulties, to control emotions, to be more aware of what we feel, and to sometimes control emotions as well.’

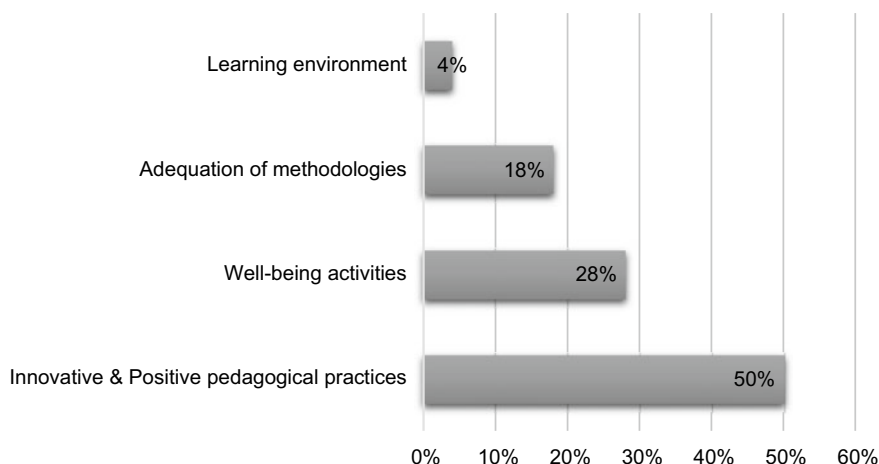
### 7.6.6 Global Evaluation of the Programme

All 23 teachers interviewed offered a very positive (17 of 23 responses, 74%): ‘I loved it! It was an excellent course’, or positive (6 responses, 26%) evaluation of the training programme: ‘I have liked to be a part of it, because people felt good with the activities that have been done’.

Positive and innovative pedagogical practices were the most mentioned positive characteristic of the programme (14 references, 50%) which contributed to the positive evaluations (Fig. 7.9).

- ‘First and foremost, it was a very different training from the usual, I mean, positively different!’
- ‘It was completely new. Very different (course) from what I was used to’.
- ‘...It was more focused on a lot of hands-on activities, but it always provided us with the theoretical content, and I think it was quite interesting’.





**Fig. 7.9** Perceived positive characteristics of the training programme

Eight other answers, out of the 28 total responses that characterised the positive evaluation of the programme (29%), pointed out to the kind of activities performed during the training:

- 'There were sessions... like meditation activities, which help me a lot'.
- 'I liked it because I had fun and relaxed quite a bit'.

Another five responses (18%) refer the adequacy of the methodologies:

- 'I liked the way the course was set up'.

## 7.7 Concluding Remarks

In this age of accountability and higher academic standards, schools are increasingly under pressure to respond effectively to student needs and being pushed to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching (Day et al. 2007). This is an issue burdening teachers and contributing to their stress and burnout. Consequently, teacher professional development focused on resilience and well-being is a key issue when designing both pre- and in-service teacher training (Dweck 2014; Le Cornu 2009; Leroux and Théorêt 2014). Through a thematic analysis approach, this chapter examined the professional journeys of teachers who have undertaken a training programme aiming to foster resilience and well-being. The major goal of the chapter was to illustrate how change, through professional transitions and transformations and, notably, through training, has shaped the attitudes and beliefs of teachers regarding their resilience, well-being and practices. The content analysis of teachers' discourse about the learning experiences in terms of learning activities

and learning outcomes highlighted the importance of professional learning in three different contexts or domains: a theoretical domain, a social domain and a personal practice domain.

As stated previously, partnerships between universities and schools played a key role in the implementation of this positive education programme. Teachers often experience a gap between research and practice, and shared knowledge between scholars and practitioners may act as a source for teachers' professional learning and innovation of practices. The learning activities proposed in the training programme allowed teachers to be exposed to new input, forcing teachers to rethink their routines based on the theory–practice linkage (Snoek et al. 2018). Moreover, the programme helped teachers to foster their resilience and conflict management skills, experience of positive feelings, personal empowerment and improved conflict management skills. In short, theory and research-based evidence provided teachers with new concepts and new tools to look at daily practice through a different lens.

Regarding the social domain, a major goal of this training programme was to bring teachers together and reply to one of the biggest obstacles to teacher professionalism: isolation (Hargreaves 2000). Social learning through the training activities offered a context in which teachers improved relationships with colleagues and students, as well as relationships with co-workers (e.g. teaching assistants, psychologists, administrative staff, etc.). Collaborative activities also provided a context for exchanging ideas and experiences with colleagues, developing positive interactions and highlighting the critical role of relationships, ensuring that teachers will remain resilient across their teaching career (Mansfield and Gu 2019). As an example of exchange and collaboration, teachers recognised the role of the facilitator as an important operational feature in this professional learning programme. This role, in terms of actions, became essential in all training sessions, and the facilitator actions actively positioned teachers as self-directed learners, enabling them to explore the learning experiences proposed at workshops. These actions were essential for programme acceptability and success, requiring the facilitator to break out of habitual behaviours and critically analyse, in action and retrospectively, the most appropriate actions to support teacher learning. Additionally, the reflection activities also permitted teachers to move beyond actions and began to encourage teachers to consider and engage with potential drivers of action.

A key message emerging from literature in the area of teacher education is that professional learning must be personal (Smith 2017). This means that teaching is not merely a technical procedure, but a complex set of personal and social processes and practices. Taking time to think about personal practice may assist teachers in building a stronger sense of professional identity. Teachers who participated in this training programme reported changes in knowledge and beliefs and the use of knowledge to gain greater consciousness about self and emotions. Furthermore, the personal practice domain is reflected in the use of more positive pedagogical management strategies as well as on a better understanding of students' needs. Such findings provide indicative evidence of awareness in action as a result of taking time to think about the professional behaviour and practice. These outcomes may be conceptualised as increased or changed knowledge, intentions, practices and emotions, and

call for the need to apply positive psychology constructs like strengths and hope in school settings to empower teachers. Besides, we suggest that learning is central to being and becoming within the personal professional development of teaching expertise and call for the importance of teachers to actively shape (e.g. Greenfield 2015) their ongoing personal professional development by sharing (Pearce and Morrison 2011; Sprott 2019) different approaches to personal professional learning.

Some limitations should be acknowledged in this study. First, the teachers interviewed were all volunteers, which means that the most enthusiastic teachers of those who participated in the training probably participated in this part of the study. Second, the interviews were conducted by a psychologist who was neither related to the training nor was known to the participants, which may have inhibited greater participation by teachers during the interviews. Despite these limitations, this study provides evidence for how teachers perceived the training and the changes that it produced both at the personal and professional levels. Furthermore, and taking into account that another evaluation of the programme (Fernandes et al. 2019) showed increases in self-efficacy beliefs, resilience, emotions, motivation and well-being, this study provides additional evidence for how teachers became aware of these changes.

Finally, and at a more global level, we summarise policy implications arising from the findings of this programme that support teacher professionalism. Teacher educators and policymakers must commit to enhancing teacher professionalism through concrete and targeted policies and to create conditions that enable teacher development as a result of the exchange of experiences. The structure of the programme, based on the sharing of experiences and the interactions between colleagues, was an aspect especially valued by the teachers interviewed. Along these lines, opportunities need to be provided that allow teachers themselves to value their personal-professional knowledge and feel comfortable enough to share their professional expertise with colleagues.

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