

Teacher Discomfort: Reflections on the Low Academic Performance of University Students

Malestar docente: reflexiones frente al bajo rendimiento académico en estudiantes universitarios

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Summary

The present research examined reflexively the causes of teacher discomfort linked to the negative results of students' performance. It was carried out under a qualitative approach with multiple case study design subjecting 10 university teachers to in-depth interviews. The results were disaggregated into the following categories: predominance of contradictory feelings; inability to endure anxiety; inhibition; self-depreciation; anxiety as a dominant trait and balance; acceptance of conflict as an objective reality. It was concluded that the interviewees agreed on a contradiction between the higher education system to promote quality and the real provision of the tools and conditions to do so in practice. They manifested positions of lethargy conditioned by the need to work for the provision of resources, but with the awareness of the relevance of their social role as educators of a generation of students who require methodologies that challenge and encourage creativity in a digital education context.

Keywords: Educational Personnel; Stress Related Diseases; Unjustified Absence; Evaluation.

Resumen

La investigación examinó reflexivamente las causas del malestar del docente vinculadas a los resultados negativos del rendimiento estudiantil. Se realizó bajo un enfoque cualitativo con diseño de estudio de casos múltiples usando entrevistas en profundidad a 10 docentes universitarios. Los resultados se desagregaron en las categorías siguientes: predominio de sentimientos contradictorios; incapacidad para soportar la ansiedad; inhibición; depreciación del yo; ansiedad como rasgo dominante y equilibrio; aceptación del conflicto como realidad objetiva. Se concluyó que los entrevistados concordaron en una contradicción entre el sistema educativo superior para impulsar la calidad y la provisión real de las herramientas y condiciones para hacerlo en la praxis. Manifestaron posiciones de aletargamiento condicionado por la necesidad del trabajo para su provisión de recursos, pero con la consciencia de la relevancia de su rol social como educador de una generación de estudiantes que requieren de metodologías que desafíen y fomenten la creatividad en el contexto de la educación digital.

Palabras clave: Personal educativo; Tensión laboral; Ausencia injustificada; Evaluación.

Introduction

The treatment of educational quality implies mentioning academic performance as an essential component, since it is the main indicator for measuring it (Díaz, Apocada, Arias, Escudero, Rodríguez & Vidal, 2002). However, going beyond what is measurable, there are enough arguments to confirm that, for the most part, the public policies of Latin American countries have pointed out this aspect as the primary one to transform their developmental models, recognizing this as part of an integrated whole that involves economy, society and culture. These efforts have led to the development of multiple models that explain the low levels of performance. Thus Garbanzo (2007) indicated that it is a result of the interaction of social, personal and institutional determinants, making an additional reflection on the relevance of the objectivity of strategic monitoring as a substantive part for the success of the education policies implemented.

On the other hand, it is inevitable to consider stress as a cause/consequence of the academic failure of many students around the world (Umar, 2019), pointing out that it is defined as an uncomfortable sensation in people who feel a lot of demand or external pressure, exceeding the personal and social resources they have to respond to, erecting a threat to their well-being and personal integrity (Sarita, 2015). These stressors are visualized in a pattern symptomatology among which there are the lack of energy, participation in self-medication, depression, restlessness, difficulty to concentrate and pay attention (Nagle & Sharma, 2018).

In spite of the veracity of these assertions, with the over-visualization of what surrounds the student, little attention is paid to the environment in which teachers operate, generally taking teaching methodology or didactics as a modifiable causal factor to diminish the reality of observed low academic performance (Vélez, Veliz, Veliz & Vásquez, 2019). Although there are already researchers who demonstrate levels of dissatisfaction and stress of teachers in the work done (Acosta, Jiménez, Guillermo & Redondo, 2019; Rodríguez Ávila, Bermello, Pinargote & Duran, 2018; Padilla, Bonivento & Pérez-Suarez, 2017; Cárdenas, Méndez & González, 2014; Urquidi & Rodríguez Jiménez, 2010) it is notorious that this topic has a greater academic development in health professionals and even in teachers of regular basic education where greater levels of discomfort among workers are assumed than in higher education settings. Therefore, generating more evidence, in addition to the need to better elucidate the causes of discomfort in this professional group were the motivating point for the formulation of this research, focusing it from a perspective that seeks to rely on the model of the socio-cognitive theory of self (Gil-Monte & Peiró, 1999), which gathers a large part of Bandura's socio-cognitive theory (1986a), proposing four categories based on the explanation of teacher discomfort from its own conception (Esteve, 1997) and trying a sort of additional explanation in the social and organizational interrelations that also explain the appearance of stress in workers (Gil-Monte, 2003). According to Albert Bandura's socio-cognitive theory of self, self-efficacy, defined as the judgments of individuals about their own capacities to reach levels designated by performance, differs from self-esteem and self-concept because it is based on the beliefs that people have of themselves projects in the future (Mohamadi, Asadzadesh, Ahadi, & Jomehri, 2009). This implies that teachers who do not expect to be successful with some of their students are very likely to make less of an effort in the preparation and availability of instruction, ignoring the first sign of difficulty they may have, even though they could employ strategies, as long as these are more applied (Bandura, 1997b). Therefore, the belief or degree of security that the individual has in his own capacities has repercussions in the performance at the moment of fulfilling objectives or in the facility or difficulty that they have to achieve it; under this parameter some of his emotional reactions will manifest as depression, anxiety or stress (Gil-Monte & Piero, 1999, López-Ríos & Ortega-Ruiz, 2004; Manzano-García & Ayala-Calvo, 2013). This theory provides a general guide to the possible sources of teachers' sense of effectiveness (Mohamadi et al, 2009).

As a review, it is known that the first works that provide evidence of dissatisfaction in university level teachers were done at the beginning of 1970 (Eckert & Williams, 1972), increasing in the decade of the 80's, highlighting the works Gmelch, Lovrich & Wilke (1984; 1986), from which the sources of stress of this human group were systematized up to the present time, highlighting labor instability, work overload, time limiting factors, and lack of institutional recognition in the majority of western teachers. For the Japanese and Chinese, the effects of tension linked to professional performance evaluation processes stand out (Xiao-Xing et al., 2000). In the case of Latin Americans, conditions of low wages, little recognition, precarious working infrastructure (Martínez-Rizo, 1998) and voluble labor policy conditions stand out (Urquidi & Rodríguez Jiménez, 2010). At present, greater importance is being given to the study of indicators that would reveal stress, such as Suchodoletz, Rojas, Nadyukova, Larsen & Uka (2019) and Jones-Rincon & Howard (2019), which seek to standardize procedures that favor the early identification of stress in teachers in order to employ strategies that reverse this condition.

Selye (1978) indicated that stress is understood as an internal force or external actions that disturb individual stability. In an extension of this definition, Kyriacou & Sutcliffe (1978), Marenci & Ávila (2016) stated that work-related stress is directly related to mental stress and to the pressure associated with the worker's skills, abilities and competencies to react and manage diverse situations within their work scenarios in the most intelligent and resilient manner possible. On the other hand, Agbatogun (2010) identified that, in the case of teachers, the main stressful factors are work overload, conflicts within classrooms, conflicting interpersonal relationships and the conditions offered by the institution it employs. Likewise, Addae, Parbooteah & Velinor (2008) added other factors that are the ambiguity and conflict of roles framed within the performance of their labor functions. On the other hand, there is also scientific evidence that indicates that teachers' stress levels increase when they do not feel a socioeconomic state that

allows them to have a decent life, transforming themselves into social anguish that is expressed in a rejection of government regimes due to the fact that the only culprit is the economic system that prevails within countries (Humphrey, 2002).

It is also known that work stress has a negative relationship with work performance, which is the basic criterion on which evaluations are made that condition the continuity of teachers' work. Therefore, in positive terms, if the entity has people who are self-efficient, satisfied and motivated in carrying out their work, then it will obtain excellent student performance (Sonnetag, Kuttler & Fritz, 2010) and teacher satisfaction (García, Escorcía & Pérez, 2017). In the case of teachers, performance would be visualized in good teaching-learning processes. On the other hand, although in many emerging countries the teaching profession is reduced to a collective perception of "easy", in reality it is not, due to the fact that since the end of the years 80's sociopolitical and economic changes have reduced these tasks to an apostolate, since they are extremely hard and badly remunerated (Winefield, Stough, Dua, Hapuarachchi & Boyd, 2003). Such situation leads, irremediably, to a devaluation of the teachers who end up exhausted, giving as a consequence the failures in the work, situation that was also widely clarified by Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter (2001), Ashtari, Farhady & Khodae (2009) and García-Carmona, Marín & Aguayo (2019).

Teaching performance is closely linked to the academic education of students, in any of its conditions and levels. Pedagogical development is based on the theme of interpersonal relations, which, throughout the students' formative stage, are consolidated and remain in the set of experiences that form part of their background. Nevertheless, human beings in their teleological capacity find bonds and are strengthened in themselves, levels of coexistence and social states; even more so if there is gnoseological and pragmatic experience. In this way, there are conditions that usually occur continuously, generating a series of physio-psychological reactions that, by virtue of increasing serotonin, decrease the secretion of endorphins, exteriorizing a picture of stress (Suchodoletz et al. 2019). For the teaching case, there are sufficient indications to indicate that they are due to the difficulties they encounter in their professional performance to achieve the goals set and/or programmed purposes. However, the beliefs of each university teacher are a critical component in most modern theories of human motivation (Mohamadi, et al., 2009).

In the daily practice of teaching, a series of stressful elements are observed that modify teaching behavior to such an extent that teachers may feel discouraged about their professional work. Thus, there are researchers who point out almost similar patterns in this demotivation linked to the performance of students from dissimilar areas of academic contexts (2019), which would indicate that teacher discomfort corresponds directly to student behavior patterns, being a result of interactions that could be linked to conflict between the perceptions and expectations of both students and teachers (Danish, Qaseem, Mehmood, Ali, Ali & Shahid, 2019), and could generate a decrease in teacher performance in the classroom (Willis, Reynolds & Lee, 2019), which would sharpen the contrariness described by Danish et al. (2019). In this perspective, the appearance of more acute pictures of stress in teachers is present in the burnout syndrome, which, despite not being a motive for this research, is interesting insofar as it would explain the worsening of this malaise towards pathological pictures (Gil-Monte & Peiró 1999; Gil-Monte, 2003); Esteras, Chorot, & Sandín, 2014) on the basis of complex aspects linked to the relationship between teacher and student and the cosmovision of each of them in the academic interrelation of transmission -captation (Rodríguez-Fuentes, Caurcel & Ramos, 2008); quantity - quality (Alarcón, Alcas, Alarcón, Natividad & Rodríguez-Fuentes, 2019) and rigor - applicability (Keay, Carse & Jess, 2019). In this way, the question posed: What aspects of teacher discomfort are explained from a causality of low academic performance of university students? intends to examine reflectively the causes of teacher discomfort linked to the negative results of student achievement mentioned before, taking as a point of analysis what is referred to by teachers from their daily activity as part of the university faculties.

Method

This is a qualitative study that seeks to know the perceptions of university teachers about their discomfort as such, as well as the arguments that propitiate and justify it. Ten university teachers were selected, differentiating them into two groups: five men as "A teachers" and five women as "B teachers", with more than 20 years of teaching experience working in different universities of the country. Among these professionals there were classified specialists who have taught humanities, engineering, social sciences, education sciences, health sciences and exact sciences. The selection criteria of the sample took into account Stake's proposal (1999, p. 16) in any study, the cases provide certain information, specification in the subject and depth for decision making. In effect, the design of multiple case study research was followed, which is the capacity to contrast and answer the answers obtained in each case being analyzed (Yin, 1984); in this study, therefore, a diagnosis is made of a group of teachers who carry out their work in the university environment. The choice of teachers with more than 20 years of experience was based on the dilemma of Rivas, Sepúlveda & Rodrigo (2000) and Day (2005) who suggested that teaching activity should not only be approached as work per se but as an attitude of dedication in order to recognize it as professional in this activity. On the other hand, it was interesting to classify the informants in the four areas proposed, precisely because not all those who do university teaching are professionals in education.

The in-depth interview technique was used (Flick, 2004), which follows a model of conversations between equals, having consecutive face-to-face encounters between researchers and informants (Taylor and Bogdan, 1992, p. 101), seeking to deepen transcendent details, their preferences, fears, satisfactions, anxieties, joys, among other significant aspects related to discomfort in their teaching practice with the purpose of deciphering and glimpsing the relevant characteristics of the interviewee. For the purposes of data collection, the informed consent of each of the participants was obtained, and their consent for the recording of the interview was obtained.

For the analysis of content, four categories proposed by Abraham (1975, as quoted in Esteves, 1997) were considered; they were used in the in-depth interviews, and served to understand the diverse reactions of university teachers:

Predominance of contradictory feelings: This category is discussed within the framework of Harrison's Social Competence Model (1983), considering that teachers carry out their work in contact with students. However, in the work environment there are multiple elements that make possible or hinder its effectiveness (work overload, ambiguity of roles, availability of resources and other educational inputs) that do not allow a better performance as a teacher in the face of low student performance. Therefore, the teacher's motivation will be determinant for improving his or her effectiveness in relation to the proposed objectives. Thus, the greater the motivation to improve work efficiency, the better will be their feelings related to their professional competence. Otherwise, the feelings of effectiveness will diminish as they cannot achieve the expectations of success in the students themselves.

Inability to endure anxiety. Inhibition: It is supported by the theoretical model Cherniss (1993), in which he argued that the characteristics of the work environment interact with the individual's own aspects and extra-employment factors such as social support or external demands (Ventura, Salanova & Llorens, 2014). Inhibition is closely related to self-efficacy; on the one hand, negative experiences are stressful in challenging scenarios, while positive experiences in this type of scenario are less stressful when the teacher is inhibited not to endure anxiety. However, independent and successful achievement of goals and objectives increases self-efficacy, while failure to meet objectives becomes low self-efficacy regardless of the manifestation of social cohesion that the teacher may feel.

Self-depreciation and anxiety as a dominant trait: Pine's model of self-efficacy is the relevant variable in the self-depreciation as for the development of depreciation (Gil-Montes & Pieró, 1999). Bandura claimed that self-efficacy beliefs are constructed on the basis of four sources of

efficacy information: experiences of domination, indirect experiences, verbal persuasion and physiological states (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998).

Balance: acceptance of conflict as an objective reality: When the expectations of success and feelings of self-confidence that the teacher has to reach the proposed objectives are not reached, the professional experiences feelings of frustration and tends to evade the problematic situation intellectually or behaviorally (Alonso, 2014). With this, conflict is accepted as an objective reality; therefore, depersonalized behavior is considered as the model of self-control (Thompson, Page and Cooper, 1993). The impossibility of not facing the difficulties is an indication that diminishes the confidence with the other subjects.

The analysis of the content of the categories was assisted with the use of the Atlas ti, version 8 software, which allowed a better treatment of the data and selection of findings from the interviews.

Results

Predominance of contradictory feelings

Within the teaching practice, some phenomena are arising with repercussions on the perspective of the professional future; because many students at the end of their secondary studies tend to perceive the teaching career as the last professional option: "(...) *I knew that it is not worthwhile to study education, we are a poorly paid sector, our rights are violated and we are considered the worst professionals*" (Teachers B). In this sense, the image of teachers is opposed from two perspectives: one that starts from the subjective, and the other one is associated with the image that the other actors have from it. Faced with this, a certain discontent was observed in relating the teaching career as an escape from survival: "*throughout my professional life, the teaching career has given me great hardships, I had no choice (...), however, it has compensated me in the sense of feeling part of the professional training of many young people who now contribute positively to the country*" (Teachers A).

The expectations of people outside the teaching profession influence relations towards the teacher. However, stereotypes towards teachers, both in their relations with students and other colleagues, influence on their decision-making, leading to self-selection based on whether or not they identify with the teacher's public image (Esteve, 1997). This is an image that, from the collective perspective of the interviewees, is deteriorated, so much so that they even point out that there is an invisible social rejection of professionals who, without being training teachers, practice teaching, questioning that "(...) *you surely did not find work in your professional area, that is why you carry out teaching work*" (Teachers B), diminishing the vocation to teach that all the interviewees indicated to have.

On the other hand, in the face of low student performance, the feelings observed in teachers become very susceptible, because "by not fulfilling the objectives of teaching/learning, the decrease in students' academic performance acts as a kind of barometer that allows us to understand the role we play in the formation of each one of them" (Teachers B). The contradiction arises as a kind of "guilt", according to which, on the one hand, it demonstrates a professional effort to offer all the facilities to the student to achieve the objectives, and on the other hand, it shows a kind of frustration when evidencing the low academic performance of its disciples, attributing responsibility for those results, which even goes as far as the adoption of a fluctuating behavior in their teaching practice and in their self-evaluation.

Inability to cope with anxiety Inhibition.

In 1993, Cary Chernis proposed a theoretical model, in which he argued that the characteristics of the working environment interact with the individual's own aspects and extra-occupational factors such as social support or external demands (Ventura, Salanova & Llorens, 2014). Inhibition is closely related to self-efficacy, on the one hand, negative experiences are stressful in challenging scenarios, while positive experiences in this type of scenario are less stressful when

the teacher is inhibited not to endure anxiety. However, independent and successful achievement of goals and objectives increases self-efficacy, while failure to meet objectives becomes low self-efficacy regardless of the manifestation of social cohesion that the teacher may feel.

The fact of trying to deny the reality of the low academic performance of its students causes the teacher to inhibit himself so as not to endure anxiety, being a coping strategy that could be identified in the interviewees. As part of the denial, it was observed that all the interviewees agreed in pointing out that *"they are students who, for the most part, work, highlighting the effort to study in order to 'be something more'..."*. (Teachers A), thus justifying their low performance. Although they were aware of the great relevance of the quality of education in the training of these future professionals, they decide to inhibit themselves from proceeding with the rigor that they should with them, adopting positions that 'facilitate' the studies of these people in view of the materialization of their intellectual capacity. Thus, they demonstrate their inability to support the natural anxiety of observing better results in these students, product of the teaching effort to lavish them with more and better knowledge/techniques, which finally conditions that *"(the teacher) adopts a routine attitude, avoiding his participation in the facts, (...) attitude of very frequent reaction in the academic practice of many colleagues"* (Teachers B). This revelation, although it would not be new from the teaching praxis, is worrying, because the scheme in which the student is the one who responded to the demands of the teacher is transformed into an investment in which the teacher is the one who tries to submit to the conditions of his students, in order to gain sympathies, not to be pointed out as an insensitive person, or, very probably, as a result of a mental exhaustion that incapacitates him to continue bearing the same anxiety of changing that reality that remains invariable in so many years of service.

Self-depreciation, anxiety as a dominant trait.

Pines' model of self-efficacy is the relevant variable in the self-depreciation for the development of depreciation (Gil-Montes & Pieró, 1999). Bandura claimed that self-efficacy beliefs are constructed on the basis of four sources of efficacy information: experiences of domination, indirect experiences, verbal persuasion and physiological states (Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998).

In the area of public university education, the effects of the low budget granted by the State are also felt, with precariousness in the implementation of infrastructure and equipment as well as in the allocation of hourly pay for contracted teachers. In many cases, "teachers try to make up for this shortcoming; however, the continued ability of scarce work resources to reach the minimum ideal processes causes us discomfort" (Teachers A). This malaise is understood as a fault for the failure to fulfill the responsibility to educate future generations with quality, which conditions the teacher in the search for alternative solutions to provide the necessary conditions to avoid being catalogued as a despicable citizen before society, "with the weight of guilt for not training future citizens well" (Teachers A). A situation that generates states of depression and anxiety in the very perception of its teaching practice, and can create pictures of the depreciation of the self: "if the practice corresponding to the theory cannot be done, then a teacher cannot be considered as such" (Teachers B). In this same perspective, taking into account that currently educational quality is an issue that has been assumed as a state policy, implementing a series of instruments and technical-normative tools that require teachers to comply with goals evaluated in student achievement, the weight of responsibility falls on the shoulders of these professionals, who are obliged to timely comply with the stipulations in the links, since the final evaluation is not made to the entity but to the teacher, also knowing that, as a final result of this evaluation, their work continuity is conditioned. This causes the teacher to suffer anxiety as a dominant trait, with the risk of becoming a being with cyclothymic traits that could lead to greater psychological deterioration.

Balance: acceptance of conflict as an objective reality

When the teacher's expectations of success and feelings of self-confidence to achieve the proposed objectives are not met, the professional experiences feelings of frustration and tends to evade the problematic situation intellectually or behaviorally (Mansilla, 2009). With this, conflict is

accepted as an objective reality; therefore, depersonalized behavior is considered as the model of self-control (Thompson, Page and Cooper, 1993). The impossibility of not facing the difficulties is an indication that diminishes the confidence with the other subjects.

From teacher training to practice itself, each professional is aware of the reality to which he or she would be subjected "(...) low salaries, few training opportunities, work overload, scarce work resources" (Teachers B). Therefore, with knowledge of the cause, professionals with training other than pedagogy seek to balance their activities so that they can achieve economic equilibrium, from which they seek to balance the other aspects of their objective reality. In this exercise, the teacher seeks answers in his or her own pedagogical practice, without this meaning his or her satisfaction in achieving the objectives set at the beginning of the university cycles. Nevertheless, it was observed that all the participants were also aware that reality does not start from zero, they try to understand the current situation of students in front of a weak system for university academic attention: processes of admission of students with low academic levels, which very probably is the cause of desertion in front of the academic demand: "(...) all the academic problem originates from the permissibility of the admission processes, the same ones that employ old strategies to continue capturing students, without considering the new generational changes and the new competences that we have to train in them" (Teachers B). The following are some of the most common problems: "(...) all the academic problem originates from the permissibility of the admission processes, the same ones that employ old strategies to continue capturing students, without considering the new generational changes and the new competences that we have to train in them" (Teachers B). This creates discontent among teachers who see in university entrants a group of people with many basic cognitive deficiencies so that they reach the objectives set in the academic semester, being the cause of conflicts in the classroom that the teacher will have to resolve in their working days: "(...) when academic quality is demanded of mediocre students, they do not assume a proactive critical attitude but rather seek the way to get the teacher out of the way that demands them" (Teachers A). And in the face of this, the teacher has to assume a position that opposes this force, considering also that the students will evaluate it at the end of the semester and that the result of this evaluation will categorize it, also conditioning their work continuity in the institution, as has been indicated. The acceptance of this conflict generates that the teacher adopts a position of resignation that balances the conditions that could affect him, or that the teacher leaves the chair and looks for another work niche in order to be able to continue with his academic ideals. In both cases, this conflict allows balancing the positions of the teacher against the reality that, impotently, conceives it difficult to change, choosing to accept the conflict as part of their work and "dream of changing the conditions that favor a decent and academically satisfactory life" (Docentes B), understanding that, finally, their current condition is only a stage of change that will be positive both for the students and for themselves

While it is true that low levels of academic achievement, both in public and private universities, have become an educational problem, it is also true that governments have initiated changes that seek to reverse this reality, within a context of transition between a model and system of evaluation of teaching- constructivist, investigative and continuous learning in curricular planning. But, also, traditional, by discovery and eminently oriented towards economic productivity (Tapia, 2019), towards a digital educational model that promotes the depersonalization of teaching and learning, with a clear orientation of self and free learning in an asynchronous way, framed within a cyberspace of continuous interaction without limits or prejudices (García, 2019). In this evolutionary context, teachers would have to adapt to generational changes, having the responsibility of training new, competent and global professionals, but it is necessary to change the paradigm of student-centered education, thinking that their training is also essential knowing that, in the future, they will be the teachers of future generations. On the other hand, this study has revealed that, regardless of the areas of academic performance, teachers exteriorize similar traits that lead them to affirm that there are sufficient indications to coincide with what Gagnon, Huelsman & Kidder-Ashley (2019) and Taddei, Contena, Pepe & Venturini (2019) pointed out in terms of teacher-student relations predicting 'stress in teaching'. Thus, if relations were conflictive and dependent, high levels of stress would

be predicted and, on the contrary, close relations would predict the best conditions for both actors, considering that, in addition to teaching stress, policies of labor conflict, exhaustion of work and, above all, insufficient compensation would have a substantial impact on teacher performance (Danish, Qaseem, Mehmood, Ali, Ali & Shahid, 2019; Willis, Reynolds & Lee, 2019). Added to this are the sociodemographic variables highlighted in previous research (Rodríguez Flores and Sánchez, 2018).

However, it is necessary to broaden research referred to other aspects of teachers, such as self-efficacy (García, Escorcia & Pérez, 2017; Putwain & Von Der Embse, 2019), which could better explain what has been analyzed, considering a quantitative approach that allows understanding the multiple factors that generate teacher discomfort (Ismail & Abdullah, 2019), having arguments for future proposals that allow the prevention of stress, as demonstrated by Eskic, Kuhlmann, Kreinbihl & Hammerle (2019).

Finally, the proposal for gradual changes in the higher education system, often responsible for the teachers' burnout (Esteras, Chorot, & Sandín, 2014), becomes important where there would be no linear and excessively recursive approach to explain the professional learning of teachers, but rather a system where there has to be recognized and weighed the initial conditions of each one of them and there is a need to have a strategic program of ongoing preparation in retrospect of their interaction and self-determination, to create and consolidate genuine connections with and within their environment through their knowledge, skills and relationships (Keay, Carse & Jess, 2019), in a mixture of experiences that consolidate, challenge and foster creativity in the context of digital education. In this new era of humanity, it is necessary to empower the students, in addition to the teacher, with their own learning process, through the optimization of more active teaching methodologies (Rodríguez Fuentes, Caurel and Ramos, 2008). It is necessary to empower the learners with learning strategies (Alarcón, Alcas, Alarcón, Natividad and Rodríguez Fuentes, 2019). It is equally necessary to endow this power in his own evaluation and that of his colleagues, in an attempt to share all the tasks of the didactic act, which would reduce the teacher's stress when facing this task, as he or she is the only one responsible for it (Gallego & Rodríguez Fuentes, 2017). Complementarily, it would contribute to reduce the levels of anxiety if the cooperative and collaborative work between the teachers of the same group of students were increased, as decisions would be taken in teams, assuming among all successes and failures, thus granting a power to the group that would be greater than the sum of each of the components.

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