

**INTERFACES BETWEEN TEACHER FORMATION AND WELFARE/MALAISE IN  
BASIC EDUCATION TEACHING**

***INTERFACES ENTRE A FORMAÇÃO DE PROFESSORES E O BEM/MAL-ESTAR NA  
DOCÊNCIA NA EDUCAÇÃO BÁSICA***

***INTERFACES ENTRE LA FORMACIÓN DE PROFESORES Y EL BIEN/MALESTAR  
EN LA ENSEÑANZA EN LA EDUCACIÓN BÁSICA***

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**ABSTRACT:** The article emphasizes the relationship between teacher education and the issue of teacher welfare and malaise in Basic Education and aims to understand the impacts of teaching on the health of education professionals, especially regarding the possibility of meeting basic psychological needs of individuals (autonomy, competence and belonging). The theoretical and methodological approach used in the elaboration of the article includes bibliographical research, with a qualitative bias. The analysis of these references shows that teacher education can decisively contribute to professional achievement, engendering the necessary competence, commitment and balance between personal life and work activity, essential factors for the well-being of teachers. Through this approach, it is expected to highlight the relevance of the permanent qualification of formative processes and public policies that ensure dignified living conditions and teaching practice.

**KEYWORDS:** Teacher formation. Teacher welfare and malaise. Basic psychological needs. Basic education.

**RESUMO:** O artigo enfatiza a relação da formação de professores com a questão do bem e mal-estar docente na Educação Básica e objetiva compreender quais são os impactos da docência na saúde dos profissionais da educação, especialmente no que tange à possibilidade de satisfação das necessidades psicológicas básicas dos indivíduos (autonomia, competência e pertencimento). A abordagem teórica e metodológica utilizada na elaboração do artigo contempla pesquisa bibliográfica, com viés qualitativo. A análise desses referenciais permite constatar que a formação de professores pode contribuir de modo decisivo para a realização profissional, engendrando a necessária competência, comprometimento e equilíbrio entre vida pessoal e a atividade laboral, fatores imprescindíveis para o bem-estar dos professores. Por meio dessa abordagem, espera-se salientar a relevância da qualificação permanente dos

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*processos formativos e de políticas públicas que assegurem condições dignas de vida e de exercício da docência.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Formação de professores. Bem e mal-estar docente. Necessidades psicológicas básicas. Educação básica.*

**RESUMEN:** *El artículo enfatiza la relación de la formación docente con el tema del bienestar y malestar docente en la Educación Básica y tiene como objetivo comprender los impactos de la docencia en la salud de los profesionales de la educación, especialmente en lo que se refiere a la posibilidad de satisfacer las necesidades psicológicas básicas de los individuos (autonomía, competencia y pertenencia). El enfoque teórico y metodológico utilizado en la elaboración del artículo incluye la investigación bibliográfica, con un sesgo cualitativo. El análisis de estas referencias muestra que la formación del profesorado puede contribuir decisivamente al logro profesional, generando la competencia, el compromiso y el equilibrio necesarios entre la vida personal y la actividad laboral, factores esenciales para el bienestar de los profesores. A través de este enfoque, se espera enfatizar la relevancia de la cualificación permanente de procesos de formación y políticas públicas que aseguren condiciones de vida dignas y práctica docente.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Formación de profesores. Bien y malestar docente. Necessidades psicológicas básicas. Educación básica.*

## Introduction

This text discusses the interfaces between teacher education and the issue of teacher welfare and discomfort, problematizing the impacts of teaching on the health and quality of life of educators. Furthermore, there is a reflection on the importance of meeting basic psychological needs so that individuals remain healthy and satisfied with their profession. Thus, it is expected to answer the issue: What are the impacts of teaching on the welfare/disease of Basic Education teachers and what are the possibilities for teacher formation to contribute to the health and quality of life of education professionals?

Based on Gil's definition (2008), bibliographic research is considered to be the study carried out from material already prepared (books and articles). The bibliographical research, of a qualitative nature, seeks to substantiate the writings of authors considered references in the themes of teacher education and teacher welfare/malaise, among which the following stand out: Pimenta (2005), Contreras (2002), Nóvoa (2012; 1995) and Tardif (2002), in the context of teacher formation; Esteve (1999) and Fossati, Guths and Sarmiento (2013), regarding the well-being and discomfort of teachers. From this approach, the objective is to understand what are the impacts of teaching on the health of education professionals, especially regarding the possibility of satisfying the basic psychological needs (BPN) of

individuals, which are relevant to the constitution of the feeling autonomy, competence and belonging.

It is worth emphasizing that the teacher is one of the central elements in the teaching and learning process, especially in Basic Education. This process undergoes intense transformations over time, being impacted by the specifics of each historical moment and by the peculiarities of different human societies. In particular, now, when knowledge acquires centrality, the process of teaching and learning becomes significant and demands the transformation of perceptions about the role of the teacher, seeking to value this professional as a mediator in the construction and systematization of knowledge.

Based on these considerations, there is a need to deepen research on teacher education and its relationship with the issue of teacher welfare and malaise. From this study, it is expected to think of ways to ensure the well-being of educators in the school environment, minimizing the impacts of variables perceived as causing discomfort among teachers, betting on the conviction that fulfilled and satisfied professionals perform a qualified work and are able to remain healthy, especially when they feel autonomous, competent and belonging to the school and education collective.

Therefore, this article, in its construction path, presents, in addition to the summary and the introduction, the analysis of the theme in two axes: 1- Teacher Welfare and Malaise, in which the understanding of the notions of welfare and malaise of education professionals are synthetically presented; 2 - The Configuration of Teachers' Welfare and Malaise: Teacher Formation and Basic Psychological Needs, in which the interfaces between the formative processes and the maintenance of teachers' health and well-being are outlined, through the satisfaction of basic psychological needs. The final considerations and bibliographical references that support the study are presented after.

## **Teacher welfare and malaise**

The reflection on the welfare and malaise of teachers in contemporary times requires, in the first instance, the resumption of the meanings of teaching. Tardif (2002) defines the teacher as a subject who has knowledge and know-how from his own activity, from which he structures and guides it. For the author, understanding the teacher's identity implies considering the teacher's subjectivity.

Analyzing the complexity of teaching, Tardif (2002) highlights that teaching knowledge is multiple and plurioriented, involving curricular knowledge, disciplines,

professional practice and personal experience. Curricular knowledge is related to the proposition/follow-up of objectives, organization of contents and methods, making up the school programs. The knowledge resulting from the experience results from daily work, from the experience of different pedagogical situations, constituting knowledge and know-how.

In contemporary societies, the prestige of a profession is measured by its social visibility. In the case of educators, Nóvoa (2012) argues that the survival of the profession depends on the quality of internal work in schools, but also on their ability to intervene in the public space of education. In this way, the resolution of impasses in education and in the teachers themselves goes beyond the limits of the school, involving society as a whole, based on the social valuation of education. The complexity of current societies, the existence of an unprecedented volume of information or the centrality of knowledge and its social and economic value put teachers in front of tasks that they cannot answer alone (NÓVOA, 2012).

It is necessary to advance in research related to the welfare and malaise of teachers. In particular, it is necessary to reflect on the issue in a more comprehensive way, encompassing teacher education and teacher professionalization, aspects that are neglected in most studies available in this regard. However, in contemporary society, characterized by the fragmentation of relationships and the emptying of meaning in human experience. As Bauman (2001) points out, the different spheres of contemporary society (public life, private life, human relationships) are transformed, fraying the social fabric, which loses its solidity and becomes liquefied. Thus, liquid modernity is the time of detachment, provisionality and the process of individualization, also of insecurity. Public interest is reduced to curiosity about the private lives of public figures and the art of public life is reduced to public exposure of private matters and confessions of private sentiments.

Specifically with regard to teachers, Esteve (1999) considers that teacher malaise is a feeling resulting from permanent negative effects that affect the teacher's personality. Faced with excessive daily demands, the professional develops symptoms that manifest themselves on the biophysiological, behavioral, emotional and cognitive levels. Among some symptoms, the following stand out: lack of motivation, sense of work overload, stress, irritability and decreased self-esteem.

Esteve (1999) explains that discomfort in teaching is related to two groups of factors. In the first order, there are the factors internal to the classroom, linked to the affective relationships between teacher and student, throughout the teaching and learning process. In the second order, there are environmental factors, external to the classroom and the school and that interfere in the effectiveness of the teaching action.

Fossati, Guths and Sarmiento (2013) add third-order factors related to the teacher's own person. That is, how their way of being and facing life directly interferes with their welfare/malaise, their production of meaning and their resilience skills. The authors consider that the current context presents a complex situation, which increases the feeling of malaise. However, it is possible to enhance welfare through the production of meaning in teaching, which seems to be a fundamental category to be considered. The trajectory of life and the production of meaning in the lives of teachers is expressed in different axes in the exercise of teaching. They develop different values as a response strategy to the challenges presented in their professional career.

In this sense, in the contemporary experience, the challenges posed to educators are multiple, among them the diversity of student profiles, different levels of family participation, institutional bureaucracies, precariousness of school infrastructure, flexibilization of labor laws, devaluation of education professionals, among others. In addition to these challenges, reality is marked by instability, characterizing liquid modernity (BAUMAN, 2001), impacting social relations and bringing destabilization and superficiality to human relationships. This entire context can represent obstacles to the well-being of teachers and may demand social and political transformations that seek to guarantee the dignity and protagonism of educators.

Dworak and Camargo (2017) highlight that, in the teaching profession, malaise arrives silently, with the small day-to-day tensions that accumulate and make it difficult for the pleasure of exercising their activities, leading to physical and mental exhaustion, which can influence the desire to teach. The authors point out that the school space, in addition to being the stage for these difficulties, can be a motivating environment that favors tension relief, seeking collective solutions. If we are committed to seeking well-being, we need to overcome individualization and fragmentation, acting as a collective in facing the difficulties that permeate the exercise of teaching. Teacher welfare demands educational policies that encourage solidarity and cooperation, aiming to build healthy and harmonious work environments.

### **The configuration of teacher welfare: teacher formation and basic psychological needs**

When thematizing the issue of teacher education, Pimenta (2005) emphasizes the importance of reflective processes. The author describes the meaning of the expression 'reflective teacher', highlighting the distinction of reflection as an attribute of teachers (adjective) and the movement that was called reflective teacher (concept). It is essential to

articulate everyday practices and broader contexts, since teaching is configured as a concrete social practice.

According to Pimenta (2005), the reflective teacher proposes practices that go beyond practicality and discourses on competences, aimed at technicizing the work of teachers and their formation. The theory provides analytical perspectives for understanding the historical, social, cultural and organizational contexts, also themselves as professionals, in which teaching activities take place, seeking to intervene and transform them. Therefore, it is essential to criticize material conditions.

Pimenta (2005) also warns that advances are needed to overcome fragmentation and individualism, starting to adopt collective actions that transform schools into learning communities. In this process of social and institutional transformation, the teacher presents himself as a critical intellectual. For the author, the reflection is collective, seeking to incorporate the analysis of the school in relation to broader contexts and assign meanings to the reflection. It is, therefore, an emancipatory commitment to transforming social differences.

Nóvoa (1995) argues that teachers need to have skills in (re)structuring and contextualizing knowledge. Education needs to emphasize history, the scientific way of thinking, the disciplined use of language, a thorough knowledge of the arts and religion, and the continuity of human enterprise. The teacher, when teaching, must tell a story about the content, providing opportunities for understanding the plot.

It is, then, necessary to define and redefine the teaching professionalism, helping teachers to adopt new attitudes at the individual and collective level. Person and professional; be and teach. The choices that we have to make, as teachers, cross our way of being and teaching, reveal, in our way of teaching, our way of being (NÓVOA, 1995).

Through a permanent re-elaboration of professional identity, teachers will be able to define actions that cannot change everything, but that can change something. This something is no small thing (NÓVOA, 1995). The formative processes need, therefore, to enable teachers to seek the indispensable changes and to adopt postures of commitment to knowledge, to students and to the contexts in which they work.

How is this committed, responsible educator capable of promoting change and, at the same time, maintaining well-being? This question demands the resumption of notions of teacher welfare and malaise, inquiring about the factors that guarantee the health and quality of life of educators. Among these factors, the basic psychological needs stand out: autonomy, competence and belonging.



The World Health Organization (OMS, 2006) defines that health is a condition that goes beyond the absence of disease, meaning a complex state of physical, mental and social well-being. Therefore, welfare implies the feeling of self-efficiency, autonomy, competence, self-fulfillment of the individual's emotional and potential, in private life and at work. Among the contemporary theories that can support the study of teacher motivation, the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (DECI; RYAN, 2000; 2008) stands out, which understands that there are intrinsic (interests, beliefs and own choices) and extrinsic elements (external pressures and expected results) to the *self* acting on the will and determination to perform actions. For SDT, the more the person's choices and behaviors are based on intrinsic elements and on the integration of contextual (extrinsic) principles to the value system itself, the more motivation takes on an autonomous or self-determined character, which represents the basis for satisfaction and psychological well-being (DAVOGLIO; TIMM; SANTOS; CONZATTI; 2017).

Based on the study by Davoglio *et al.* (2017), we understand that among its fundamental assumptions, the SDT sustains that the study on self-determined motivation demanded by the consideration of Basic Psychological Needs (BPN), defined as innate and universal needs, whose satisfaction are essential for well-being and healthy development (DECI; RYAN, 2000). They postulate that there are three BPN, grouped in the sense of autonomy, the sense of competence and the sense of belonging (RYAN; DECI, 2002). The sense of autonomy refers to the flexibility and feeling of independence to act in accordance with one's own principles, in view of the integration of internally approved contextual values to the self. The sense of competence refers to the need to feel effective, to cause or obtain desirable results and to avoid undesirable results in actions that involve different levels of difficulty, evidencing the subject's recognition of their own capabilities and resources. The sense of belonging/affiliation, in turn, focuses on the subject's need to feel connected and supported by other people with whom he lives, having the perception of being integrated and belonging to that context (RYAN; DECI, 2002).

José Contreras (2002) emphasizes the importance of a broad understanding of the concepts of autonomy and professionalism, overcoming superficial discourses that use these terms as mere slogans. For the author, it is necessary to go beyond the notion of autonomy as a mere possibility of acting without constraints, when teaching constitutes a work that is hopelessly full of constraints, many of which are fully justifiable, given the social, public nature of education (CONTRERAS, 2002, p. 89).

It is important to distinguish between autonomy and independence since an autonomous teacher is not independent. As Contreras (2002, p. 227, our translation) explains, “it is not possible to talk about teacher autonomy without referring to the work, institutional and social context in which teachers carry out their work”. By relating autonomy and professionalism, Contreras (2002) differentiates the models of teachers: technical specialist, reflective professional and critical intellectual. As the technical rationality model is restricted to the instrumental solution of problems through the application of theoretical and technical knowledge, autonomy is illusory, because it depends on technical guidelines, shows insensitivity to dilemmas and inability to respond creatively to uncertainties.

In turn, the reflective professional presents professional competence linked to research/reflection on the practice, with deliberation in the uncertainty about the morally or educationally correct way of acting in each case. In line with the reflective teacher model, autonomy presupposes individual moral responsibility, considering different points of view. It demonstrates a balance between independence of judgment and social responsibility, as well as the ability to creatively solve problem situations for the practical realization of educational intentions (CONTRERAS, 2002, p. 192). Regarding the teacher as a critical intellectual, Contreras (2002) presents the following description:

**Table 1 – Professional autonomy**

<b>Teacher model</b>	<b>Critical Intellectual</b>
<b>Dimensions of Teacher Professionalism</b>	
<i>Moral obligation</i>	Teaching aimed at individual and social emancipation, guided by the values of rationality, justice and satisfaction.
<i>Commitment to the community</i>	Defense of values for the common good (justice, equality and others). Participation in social movements for democratization.
<i>Professional competence</i>	Self-reflection on ideological distortions and institutional constraints. Development of social analysis and criticism. Participation in transformative political action.
<b>Conception of professional autonomy</b>	
Autonomy as emancipation: professional and social liberation from oppression. Overcoming ideological distortions. Critical conscience. Autonomy as a collective process (discursive configuration of a common will), aimed at transforming the institutional and social conditions of teaching.	

Source: Adapted from Contreras (2002, p. 192)



Based on this description, it is important to understand autonomy as a construction that encompasses personal and collective factors, seeking emancipation through knowledge, and, consequently, overcoming oppression based on critical awareness. Professionals are free to exercise their practice but participate in a collective project of school and society.

In the words of Contreras (2002, p. 195, our translation):

[...] the relationship between autonomy and professionalism is, at the same time, a claim for the human dignity of the working conditions of teachers and a claim for opportunity so that teaching practice can develop, in accordance with certain educational values, values that they are not reified in final products and states, but that act as constitutive elements, as internal guides of the practice itself. In other words, autonomy in teaching is both a labor right and an educational need.

Autonomy and professionalism, combined with competence and a sense of belonging, are essential factors for constituting teacher welfare. Teachers who develop autonomy, build ethical-political and technical-scientific competence, and who feel that they belong to the school collective, are able to face the challenges of everyday teaching and mobilize psychological and rational resources to overcome obstacles, maintaining if healthy and satisfied with the profession.

### **Final considerations**

Nowadays, the challenges posed to educators are multiple: diversity of student profiles, different levels of family participation, institutional bureaucracy, precariousness of school infrastructure, flexibilization of labor legislation, devaluation of education professionals, among others. In addition, reality is marked by instability, characterizing liquid modernity, described by Bauman (2001), impacting social relations, bringing destabilization and superficiality to human relationships.

Such factors represent obstacles to the well-being of teachers and demand social and political transformations that guarantee the dignity and protagonism of educators. These transformations do not take place out of context and require actions in the social collective. Strategies aimed at promoting care, health and professional well-being need to be built by society as a whole, engaging the different segments of the school community in defending adequate working conditions and considering education as an absolute priority.

Hence the need for debate on the working conditions and the elements that cooperate for professional fulfillment and maintenance of health and quality of life for teachers, as well

as the factors that contribute to the suffering and/or illness of teachers. Studying the well-being and discomfort of teachers is fundamental for the construction of strategies that ensure the recognition of the social relevance of educators and adequate conditions for professional practice. Among the factors, psychological needs deserve to be highlighted: autonomy, competence and belonging.

Teacher formation acquires a preponderant role. This is because the culture of the teaching profession is strengthened through competence and commitment. Ensuring teachers of the constant redefinition of knowledge and practices is fundamental, both for the social recognition of the importance of professionals and for them to perceive themselves as social actors engaged in the construction of a fairer and more solidary society.

The guarantee of teacher welfare is related to the recovery of the meanings of the teaching culture, striving for professionalization, for the organization of teaching work, for the quality of social relations in the educational context, for the consistency of formative processes and for professional development. Thus, the construction of a social pact for valuing teachers and improving working conditions and interpersonal relationships becomes essential to ensure the health and quality of life of educators. What, ultimately, cooperates for the advancement of society as a whole, as a result of the expansion of the quality of education.

Based on the reflections outlined here, the importance of expanding studies on the quality of formative processes and on the welfare and malaise of teachers is confirmed. Thus, it is possible to build consistent references to defend a social pact around education, based on the recognition of the role of the educator. In addition, it is necessary to build policies and strategies that allow decent working conditions, autonomy in the exercise of teaching, commitment to pedagogical practice, with students and with the world, and technical-scientific competence, essential to, at the same time, promote effective learning and professional fulfillment.

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