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Presence in Education

## Presentation



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in Education**

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## Prologue

The Presence Program wants to accompany teachers in the great social responsibility implied by the noble task of helping our sons and daughters to reach their full potential, through education. The word "educate" comes from the Latin "ex" and "*ducere*", and it means to get the best out of every student. Neurosciences have shown that it is through imitation or empathic resonance with their educators that children learn.

Our program seeks to assist educators in their transformation process in order to express the best of themselves as human beings. Only in this way they be able to transmit well-being to their students and build a better society, which is the ultimate goal of this project.

## Diagnosis

Throughout the world, human society faces one of its most difficult crises. Individually and as a society, we have lost our tune and harmony with life, which is the foundation of well-being. To compensate for this loss of genuine and lasting satisfaction, we find a remedy, but we do not notice that it is superficial and of a very short duration: we have developed a social and cultural model of exploitation and irrational use of nature. This model turns out to be suicidal, as it depends on the continued need for unlimited growth, on a planet that is limited.

Individually, we live with the painful feeling that "it is never enough", "it never fulfills us". We compete for goods and resources that are unfairly distributed among the world's population and they are produced through an over exploitation of the Earth's limited resources. Therefore, we are dangerously compromising the

general well-being of this and future generations. We have focused mainly on knowing/getting to know and doing/having, neglecting, to our own detriment, being and belonging.

## Education as a healing process

Know and do, be and belong they correspond exactly to the four pillars, proposed by the pioneering and famous Delors Report of the European Union of 1996. The report mentions these four pillars as: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together. Some educators and advanced educational institutions have recognized these four pillars as essential for a comprehensive education that responds to the challenges of the 21st century. Our Presence Program is intended to underpin and reinforce two of these four pillars that are generally relegated, or even forgotten, by a large part of the educational system: learning to be and learning to live together. "Human being" is a work in progress. It is not something that we possess, but something that we must achieve. To become human, we need to cultivate and strengthen the roots of Human Dignity, which will manifest through "learning to be" and "learning to live together".

A child learns to be if he is fully accepted in his uniqueness and originality. And learns to live together if he is given an unconditional sense of belonging, first in his family and then in society. When these two conditions are met, the child spontaneously acquires his sense of dignity and can become a self-respecting human being. It is essential that parents and educators provide this framework of meaning to the child.

It is really possible and fundamental to turn each school into a privileged environment where human dignity is fostered and can flourish. Achieving this is one of the central goals of our program.

"Presence" aims to make education more valuable than mere instruction: to provide not only information, but opportunities for transformation. May the process of knowing and getting to know transform us and make us better human beings.

## The remedy that we propose

The most urgent task of transformation of humanity around the world is the recovery of empathy and harmony with life. "Presence" addresses this supreme task through what we call: Stop - Look - Go. This three-step model is a simple and engaging method, but with practice it soon becomes much more than that - it becomes a way of being in tune with life.

**Stop:** everything else depends on this first step. No progress in the Presence Program will happen if we do not stop as a starting point.

The goal of Stop! –As we are here using this word– is to achieve inner stillness. Learning to stop and to remain silent is absolutely necessary to get back in tune with life, to listen to it and to respond to it, moment by moment.

**Look:** Anchored in our inner stillness, we can now, as a second step, pay full attention, with our minds and senses, to what life offers us, which is the task at hand. This does not imply “using” what life offers us at the moment, but rather enjoying it. Therefore, everything we do, including our work, can be transformed into a joyous dance with life. Seeing and looking at what life offers us, in tune with it, we can respond to every opportunity that is offered to us.

**Go:** the action that flows from this way of looking will be a joyous response to the occasion of the moment, in tune and harmony with life. It will be an intense action, but it will come without effort. Why?


Because when we act this way, force and energy flow through us. When the three steps become part of our nature - Stop-Look-Go - a personal transformation can take place, and also through it the society's transformation as well.

The Presence Program wants to walk with teachers, so that we can, step by step, fully recover the joy of life and stay awake, radiating well-being to all the children of the schools on this planet, to their families and society.

"Presence" wants to bring the dance of **Stop - Look - Go** to the classroom, one of the most sacred places in the world. This dance will make us feel fully human and our societies, re-tuned to life, will flourish, giving each of us the opportunity to develop in our originality and all of us to rejoice in a mutual belonging. **This is our dream.**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Your brother David" with a small heart symbol drawn below the word "brother".

**Brother**  
**David-Steindl Rast**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lizzie Testa" in a stylized, cursive script.

**Lizzie Testa**  
Living Gratefully Founder

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alberto Rizzo" in a bold, stylized script.

**Alberto Rizzo**  
Living Gratefully Founder





# **Presence in Education Program**

## Introduction

In recent years, a robust body of evidence has developed about the critical role of socio-emotional skills, emotional intelligence, and the cultivation of a range of attitudes on individual well-being, health, and interrelationships with others, also in the care of teachers, and concomitantly in their contribution to a more inclusive, fair and sustainable social development. The changes that arise in each individual promote transformations that benefit the whole.

The Living Gratefully Foundation is an international “network of networks”, inspired by the teachings of Brother David Steindl-Rast, which promote the practice of gratitude as the key to a fuller life and offer education, guidance and support to a dedicated world community on the practice of living gratefully, as a source of personal and social transformation of rapprochement between cultures, and responsibility for the land.

A transdisciplinary team of specialists in the field of emotional development and education, with the advice of international experts<sup>1</sup>, developed the Presence in Education Program, which proposes and invites a training journey consisting of experiences and knowledge that, progressively, enable habits of care and individual and collective well-being.

At the same time, it seeks to generate the development of skills and competences that promote ways of interrelation, of climates, of formation of communities of professional practice enabled to accompany teachers in the challenges they face every day. The purpose is to accompany them with alternatives that improve their emotional state that spring from the recognition of the tensions that they go through in their daily actions. In this sense, the practice of mindfulness enables the action of actively observing changes, it places us in the present. This makes us more sensitive to



environments and it enables us to be from another perspective. Life is constantly changing and we cannot control it. Given the stress caused by certain circumstances -such as, for example, that of making negative judgments automatically- and the concern that floods us with the challenges that we have to face and we believe that we will not be able to solve, we have ways to go through it with greater care and wellness.

The Presence Program is an invitation to experiment and to get to know ourselves more to achieve that balance that each one requires on the path of personal and professional life. It is about being able to choose alternatives for change and transformation to reach fairer and more sustainable societies and, at the same time, be grateful for life as it is offered to us.



## Contextual framework

The world is shaped by volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous scenarios, traversed by the global COVID pandemic and its effects (still unknown in terms of its real scope) nowadays. This global health crisis impacted on humanity generating losses and consequences on people's lives. In addition, it caused an impact on different facets of social development, which may imply reconfigurations of the scenarios to which we were used.

The field that concerns us in this program, that of education, is not exempt from these new complexities. The life of the school and the educational function of each of the teachers is reconstituted according to the context that changed the life and daily practices of citizens and had its correlation, in addition, to emotional life.

It is in the dimension of care and emotional well-being, where the purpose of Presence in Education is focused.

This proposal is intended for teachers as key actors in education.

It is an invitation to a training journey focused on experiences and knowledge, which can encourage ways of being present for the benefit of personal and collective care environments.

Improvements in the teaching profession and in education are conditioned by multiple variables and aspects that make up and condition the complex educational process and its actors; these factors include: social, economic, cultural contexts, working conditions, policies, infrastructure and equipment, educational communities, human rights and their effective fulfillment, inequalities, inclusion, social value.

The Presence Program and the path that invites you to walk, is not a substitute for and does not ignore what has been previously described; quite the contrary. Achieving fairer societies with greater

well-being will be a collective multi-pronged journey, where the role of governments and policies are crucial.

The proposal that we are presenting provides the opportunity to be able to walk these complex paths from another perspective, focused on the training of each teacher on a personal level, providing elements for their self-knowledge and self-regulation, among other purposes, without trying to limit or exhaust educational and professional life improvement in this approach and these practices. However, there is ample evidence that change at the individual level through the appropriation of certain practices and knowledge generates greater care and physical and emotional improvements that expand and impact the group and the contexts.

For some years now, the issue of teacher discomfort has been part of the field of scientific knowledge, being approached from different disciplines. In mid-March 2020, the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, together with the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), launched a survey with the aim of understanding how teachers in the US emotionally go through the crisis of COVID-19. Based on a sample of more than 5,000 teachers from across the United States, the 5 factors most mentioned in the survey were: anxiety, fear, worry, overload and sadness.

According to what the teachers answered, these feelings related to stress are explained, on the one hand, by the generalized fear of contracting the virus or that a loved one will contract it. On the other hand, these emotions are linked to the stress of having to manage their needs and those of their families, while working full time from home and adapting to new technologies for teaching.

Although these emotions and feelings can be considered to be strongly associated with the uncertainty related to COVID-19, there is a body of studies showing that they also occur outside the



context of a pandemic. Already in 2017, the same team had carried out a similar survey of teachers in the United States and the results were also similar. The emotions mentioned by more than 5,000 teachers surveyed at that time were: frustration, overload, stress, fatigue and happiness. The main source of frustration and stress at that time was associated with not feeling supported by the management team of the educational institution regarding the challenges involved in reaching learning achievements in all students, the numerous evaluations, the constant changes in the curriculum and the difficult work-life balance.

In 2018, research by Brackett's team identified that 85% of the teachers surveyed reported that the imbalance between life and work affected their ability to teach, and that around 30% of teachers in the United States left their profession in the first 5 years of practice. According to this study, the main causes of stress and burnout in teachers are related to:

- The lack of strong leadership and a negative climate in educational institutions.
- An increase in the demands of their work related to evaluations, the students' behavior .
- Lack of teachers' autonomy .
- Limited or no training in socio-emotional skills to support teachers in their work with the students emotional needs.

Likewise, teaching is highly valued as a job in different societies around the world, which translates into how respected teachers are and how recognized for their job.

According to a study by the Varkey Foundation that measures how teachers are perceived by the public, while countries such as China, Malaysia, Taiwan and Indonesia present high levels of appreciation and status of the teaching profession, Brazil and Israel are among the countries that least value the teaching profession. This has a huge impact on the emotional well-being of those who decide to take up this profession.

With the levels of stress and burnout that exist among the teaching community, educational governments of different levels seek to provide support tools to teams. The CARE (Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education) program, developed by Patricia Jennings, Christa Turksma and Richard C. Brown, aims at helping teachers manage their stress levels and re-engage with the pleasure of teaching. According to research carried out to measure the impact of this program (compared to a control group), those teachers who had participated in it were more positive and showed greater sensitivity towards their students' needs. Likewise, the students of those teachers demonstrated better levels of productivity. After participating in the program for 9.5 months, the teachers reported: a reduction in their physical pain, an increase in their ability to regulate emotions and a significant decrease in psychological distress.



Today, leaders, experts and social scientists from different spectra and fields agree on the need to train all people in those competences and skills that promote greater personal well-being and bring forth habits and attitudes such as care, compassion, gratitude, trust, which are necessary for the development of fairer societies.

These aims are included in the principles of any education law, in part due to Jacques Delors' great contribution, which anticipated the challenges that the new century would impose on education and defined four pillars - bases or foundations - for the education of the new century that were disseminated in the renowned UNESCO World Report. The Report already stipulated an education to prepare for life, for happiness and for being able to actively contribute to society. The Four Pillars of education<sup>2</sup>:

- Learn to Know
- Learn to Do
- Learn to Be
- Learn to Live together

As it can be observed, Delors highlighted two new senses in education that expanded its mission; in its traditional vision, education referred to Knowing and Doing and now the missions of Learning to Be - the realization of the person - and Learning to Live Together - the meaning social education - are added.

Without trying to define or characterize each of these pillars here, we will highlight some notions that the author embodies in these foundations.

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2 "The four pillars of education" in *Education contains a treasure*. Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the XXI Century, Madrid, Spain: Santillana / UNESCO

Learn to Be invites to think and to practice education as an inner journey that leads to discovering oneself in order to discover others and interact in society. It should be noted that this pillar contains the idea of human dignity.

Learn to Know is comparable to the idea of Learn to Learn throughout life. Learn to know is no longer a matter of assimilation of content. In this sense, Delor warned of the ways in which new information, network and mobile technologies could invade superficiality and put at risk three essential capacities that human beings need to cultivate in order to learn how to learn throughout life. These essential capacities, which he called antidotes to superficiality, are: attention, memory and thinking.

The Learn to Do pillar refers to those complex competences that every person requires to be able to function in the world and it refers to the capacities to behave socially, communicate properly, work as a team, solve conflicts, have initiative, be resilient.

In the pillar Learn to Live Together, he invites us to be aware of the similarities and interdependence between diverse human beings. The knowledge of the other begins with the knowledge of oneself. Only then can you understand and respect others. In addition, it expresses the need to promote empathy as a fundamental step to eradicate prejudice and hatred against other cultures. Plus he maintains the importance of establishing common objectives as a condition of learning to live together.

It is enough to take a look at the evolution of education, to notice that the centrality in mass education was marked primarily by aspects of two of the four pillars that Delors proposes. On the one hand, learn to know, crystallized in a standardized curriculum - with variations depending on the reform period - in terms of content, competences, capacities and abilities and, secondly, in learn to do,

the instrumental dimension and approach to reality and context. The pillars of being and living together were partly more circumscribed to the area of principles stipulated by the laws that regulate education.

These pillars demanded to be actively incorporated into mass education, a change of model.

Thus, the idea of re-imagining education is not new. What is new lies in the unprecedented context that we go through as societies and as humanity. The current scenarios and the changes they have brought about are also an invitation to ask new questions and to rethink the paths of teacher training.

We are living a special period to stop and look at how education can promote opportunities to train people on the path of seeking personal and collective well-being in order to choose transformative alternatives and implement them.

We inhabit societies where the revolution of knowledge, information and communication, scientific and technological advances, the transdiscipline, Big Data, nanotechnology, quantum physics, new forms of collaborative creation, new languages, among other multiple aspects, produce new questions about the purposes of education. In this sense, it is common for education to refer to the gaps between advances in knowledge and their arrival in the classroom. From this perspective, school will always be out of time. But it should be noted that it is incorrect to conceive that education can teach at the speed that the world changes, responding to an endless number of new and constant requirements. It is not a tension that dissipates by adding new content. It will not be the role of the school to be able to cover all knowledge that today, in addition, to a large extent, is accessible through the web.



This leads to re-imagining the deeper purpose of education, and the essential role that each educator plays.

Being able to train the new generations in the development of being and learning to live together, resurfaces as a call, related to what is substantial that we have not yet been able to fully deploy in this area.

It is here, where we should ask ourselves, if the new proposals for a better education include the one that opens the opportunity for the original of each human being to emerge and expand.

This scenario leads us to seek new answers, not only to provide partial solutions to the problems of immediacy, but may be a proposal for deeper dialogues in relation to the educational meanings, the new essential role of educators and also the role of the social group in terms of the education of the younger generations.

Choosing the best alternatives in education will not be a path of quick answers or certainties. But perhaps, re-imagining in a co-creative way from another place, that will accompany this process and provide space for innovative pedagogies that strengthen the person and promote greater individual and collective care.

An atypical circumstance we had to go through at this time. In a world characterized by complexity, the global pandemic emerged, causing new alterations and evidencing challenges and, at the same time, opportunities, which induced changes in each one of us, in the societies and worlds we inhabit and in humanity as a whole. In this sense, the collective response of taking care of oneself, respecting social distance and wearing masks, not only to protect themselves but to take care of the other, was according to Otto Sharmer, a unique example of how transformative it can be for the social group to direct its attentional energy to a purpose; furthermore, in this case it was an altruistic purpose full of human dignity.

At present, educational leaders and experts from the philosophical, sociological, pedagogical, psychological fields, as well as different currents and spiritual beliefs, in addition to neuroscientific advances (among other fields), converge for the first time, in prioritizing and put on the agenda the formation of being and living together as substantive dimensions in the formation of citizens.

It is a time which we must take advantage of to stop, look, and then the best response options will emerge to promote well-being and the common good. Immediacy and speed will not help to find those meanings that we are all looking for today and that societies need.

## Background

### 21st century skills and focus on the emotional dimension as a priority on the global agenda

The challenge of educating requires a transformation enabling the acquisition of new competences and skills, in order to bring out the underlying originality in every child or adolescent and seize opportunities for substantive learning. This challenge requires present and attentive teachers who are personally prepared in terms of self-knowledge and regulation, and the cultivation of calm, gratitude and care attitudes that constitute human dignity, well-being and sustainable social development.

Research<sup>3</sup> in the mindfulness field highlights, among other findings, greater openness to accept challenges, increased creativity, the possibility of taking opportunities when they arise, anticipating risky situations, greater openness towards others. In turn, it was observed that others perceive us in a better way, as we are less critical of them.

Why does the Presence Program in Education focus its purpose on teachers? Currently, there is evidence based on the assumption that teachers' burnout is the result of a disruption in their ability to cope with difficult situations, that worsens over time. This condition, according to various researchers, has three dimensions: emotional burnout, depersonalization, and feelings of lack of accomplishment (Jennings, 2019<sup>4</sup>; Maslach, Jackson and Leiter, 1997<sup>5</sup>).

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3 **Langer, E., & Beard, A. (January 01, 2014).** *Mindfulness in the Age of Complexity*. Harvard Business Review, 92, 3, 68-73.

4 **Jennings, P. A. (2019).** *Mindfulness for teachers: simple skills for peace and productivity in the classroom*. Olivos: Edunautas.

5 **Maslach, C., Jackson, S. E., y Leiter, M. P. (1997).** *Maslach Burnout Inventory (Inventario de agotamiento en Maslach)* En C. P. Zalaquett y R. J. Wood (Eds.), *Evaluating stress: A book of resources* (pp. 191-218). Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Education.

If continuous, this condition can cause critical physical and mental health problems, sometimes resulting in loss of interest and consequently unfavorable impressions about the school and its environment (Jennings 2019; Zhangy Sapp, 2008<sup>6</sup>). Ultimately, it also gives rise to learning environments that are unsuitable for deep education.

There is a varied field of experiences and initiatives that address the development of 21st century skills and abilities, and among them, those related to the emotional dimension and well-being.

Without intending to cover the whole field in these paragraphs, we can cite some examples. From the academic field, Marc Brackett says that emotions shape and influence learning, decision-making processes, creativity, social ties and even people's health. According to Brackett, emotional well-being and society's sustainability are strongly associated with the individuals' ability to use their emotions intelligently. Regarding the educational field, in his book "Permission to Feel" (2019)<sup>7</sup>, the author argues how some of the main aspects of learning - attention, focus and memory - are controlled by emotions, not by cognition, and he conducts research and training at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence aimed at developing emotional intelligence in people of all ages, especially focusing on educational institutions.

Among his main research, Brackett tested the impact of five emotional intelligence skills- self-awareness, empathy, the understanding of the causes and consequences of emotions, the labeling of emotions, the appropriate expression of emotions and effective

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6 **Zhang, Q., y Sapp, D. A. (2008).** A burning issue in teaching: The impact of perceived teacher *burnout* and nonverbal immediacy on student motivation and affective learning. *Journal of Communication Studies*, 1, 152–192.

7 **Brackett, M (2019).** *Permission to Feel: Unlocking the Power of Emotions to Help Our Kids, Ourselves, and Our Society Thrive.* Celadon books, New York.



emotion regulation (RULER) - on a range of individual behaviors and on the school climate; these are essential factors for effective child and youth development.

This type of research informs and feeds decision-making regarding educational practice and policies, demonstrating that emotional intelligence can improve results in terms of leadership, teaching and learning in schools. Among the main impacts of the RULER socio-emotional training program, which was implemented in more than 2,000 schools in the United States, are:

- Improvement in students' school performance
- Improvement in the school climate of participating institutions
- Development of emotional skills
- Lower incidence of attention problems
- Higher leadership skills
- Lower incidence of anxiety and depression in schools
- Less stress and burnout effects<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> For more information: <https://www.ycei.org/research-overview>

Brackett developed the concept of emotionally intelligent schools and implemented a method to support educational institutions in the process of understanding the value of emotions, teaching emotional intelligence skills, and helping to build and sustain climates of positive emotions in the schools.

Another recognized program that deals with stress factors in education is CARE (Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education), which was specifically designed to address stress factors in education. Among the benefits assessed in CARE were that teachers learned to manage stress and make teaching more dynamic and, as a result, improved their relationships with their students, classroom management, and students' socio-emotional learning; they experienced improvements in wellness, and mindfulness in comparison



to a control group (Jennings, Frank, Snowberg, Coccia, and Greenberg, 2013<sup>9</sup>). The sense of urgency decreased, and they felt less pressed for time. Compared to the control group, participants showed significant improvement in observation and non-reaction, two dimensions that make up Mindfulness practice.

In 2015, more than 190 nations around the world agreed on the definition of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the achievement of which would lead to developing a better world by 2030. UNESCO points out, in recent publications, in the framework of the fulfillment of the SDGs, the need for human beings to learn to be empathetic, share finite available resources and understand that the generation of wealth is not the key to the well-being and happiness of people. In this sense, this organization proposes to train young people in social and emotional learning so that they can base their actions and decisions on the concept of kindness or consideration of others. Kindness in this proposal is understood as a force that will contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, to the construction of a more just and sustainable world, a better place for the future of our children.

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<sup>9</sup> Jennings, P. A., Frank, J. L., Snowberg, K. E., Coccia, M. A., y Greenberg, M. T. (2013). *Improving classroom learning environments by Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE): Results of a randomized controlled trial*. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 28, 374–390.

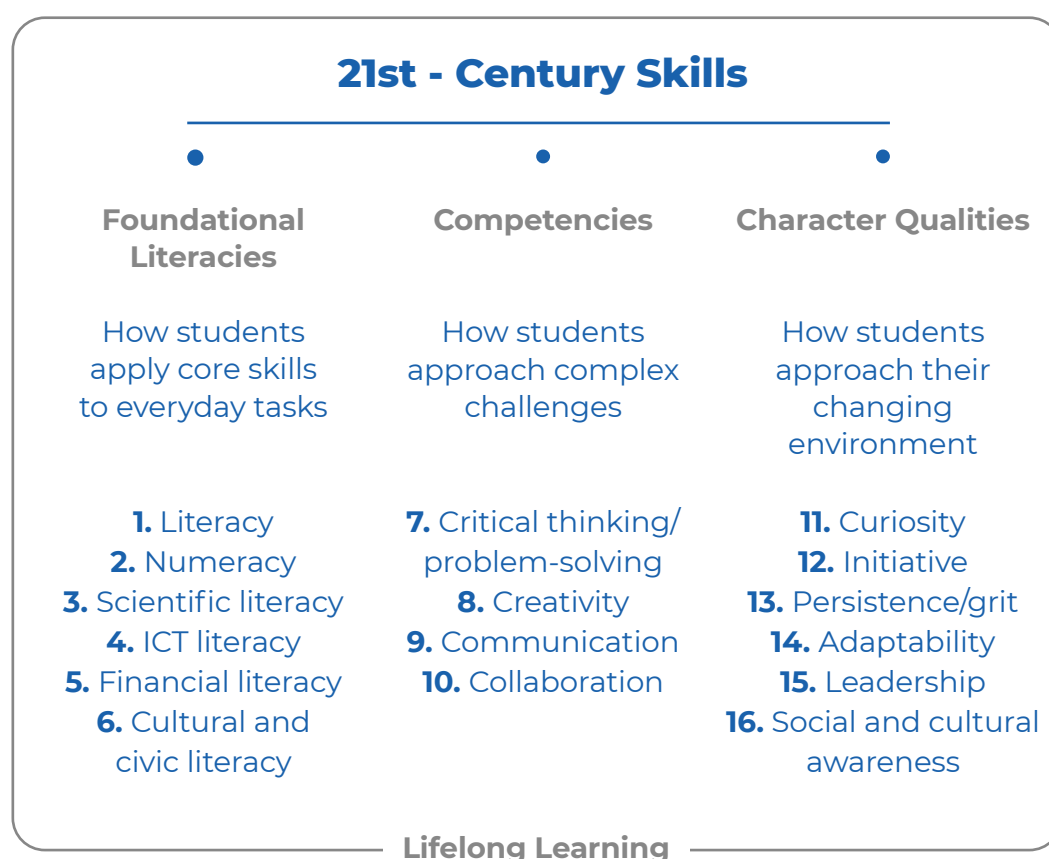
This type of training helps individuals recognize and regulate their emotions, identify positive purposes for their actions, show empathy, and promote human well-being. In this same series of publications, UNESCO uses the contributions of neuroscience to argue how positive behaviors and thoughts such as kindness, compassion and empathy can be trained and strengthened through neuroplasticity. According to UNESCO, this type of behavior and skills are fundamental for a more sustainable future. In particular, UNESCO identifies some ways in which schools can help students cultivate goodness: avoiding rewards for good behavior and making students experience the gratification of the exercise of kindness, using nudges or stimuli that promote good treatment at school, greeting students by name, using a warm tone of voice when talking to them, recognizing their efforts in their tasks and helping them to express gratitude, are some of the simple and concrete actions identified.

Various experiences have been developed in general terms with a view to promote emotional well-being and developing socio-emotional skills, based on the training of teachers, management teams and even students.

For example, the Awake Schools Program (Programa Escuelas Despiertas), developed at the University of Barcelona, is a mindfulness training program applied to education, aimed at educators who seek well-being in their lives and want to lower stress and anxiety, while creating a healthy, ethical and empathetic environment in classrooms and schools.

The assumption behind this type of program is that teachers who are more empathetic and aware of their emotions and those of their students, are better teachers, provide a better education and achieve a healthier human relationship with their students.

There is general consensus that critical and creative thinking, collaboration and communication are fundamental skills for the 21st century (Reimagine Education, World Economic Forum Skills for 21st Century). However, despite their increasing relevance, few institutions have strengthened their curriculum by incorporating these “universal or human” skills, assuming that students would acquire them on their own.



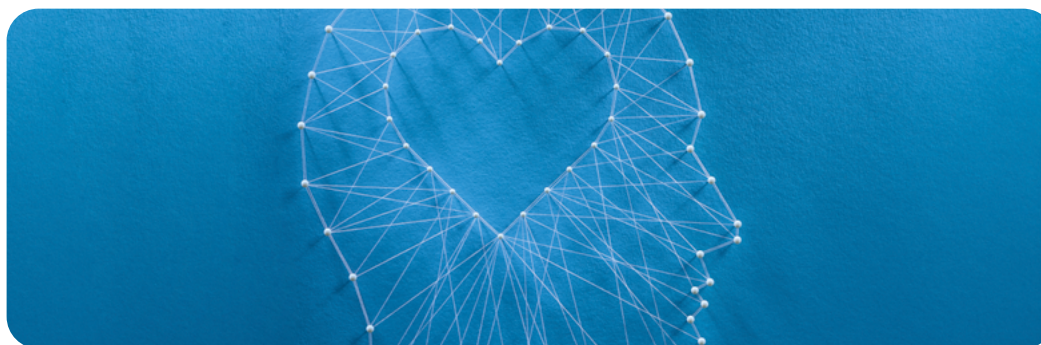
**Fuente:** World Economic Forum, New Vision for Education (2016)

The Minerva Project, a pioneer in educational transformation and member of the 21st Century Skills Coalition promoted by the IDB, aims to promote the development of these skills in Latin America and the Caribbean. This project identifies four core competences: critical thinking, creative thinking, effective collaboration, and effective interaction. For training purposes, these competences are divided into "habits of the mind", cognitive skills that become automatic when faced with correct stimuli, and "foundational concepts" or applicable knowledge.

The Minerva Project proposal integrates global guidelines for education to change and promote the competences and skills required for a better life and better societies. Besides, there are more and more initiatives and research that contribute knowledge to generate actions based on the education of the being, of emotions and on the creation of life habits that take care of health, well-being and the environment.

The World Bank maintains the importance of including social and emotional skills (SES, social and emotional skills) in the educational curriculum explicitly and through specific and focused activities. According to Kudo, an education specialist at the World Bank, a comprehensive and integral learning that combines a series of socio-emotional skills is one that leads to increased well-being and improvements in teaching and learning processes. In this sense, Kudo points out the importance of having positive school environments and the key role that teachers and heads of educational institutions assume in this regard when promoting care and respect as fundamental pillars in classrooms and schools.

UNICEF defines socio-emotional learning (SEL, social and emotional learning) as the process of acquiring social and emotional values, attitudes, competences, knowledge and skills essential for the learning and well-being of children and adolescents. This learning includes emotional literacy, resilience, persistence, motivation, empathy, communication, self-esteem, respect, and self-regulation, among other skills. A document was developed by UNICEF, a global framework on transferable skills where these 21st century skills (socio-emotional or life skills) are defined and operationalized, and it is argued that these are the ones that allow children and adolescents to become active subjects of learning, citizens capable of going through personal and academic challenges, both social and economic.



In the same way that other organizations that work in the educational field maintain, these socio-emotional skills are, according to UNICEF, a fundamental aspect of the curriculum or study plan. In this sense, different offices have designed, in alliance with national and local governments, programs aimed to develop knowledge and social and emotional skills from within the educational system itself. In the case of UNICEF Macedonia, an initial level teacher training program was developed aimed to balance disciplinary and literacy content in the curriculum with a strong development of social and emotional skills. A similar project based on the development of socio-emotional skills was implemented in Montenegro, with adolescents from the educational system. According to the adolescents themselves, their participation in the program brought multiple benefits to their daily lives, in terms of education, school climate and well-being in general. In the case of Peru, from the Friendly Schools program a -Step by Step- curriculum was implemented that incorporated skills for the well-being of students and based on an impact evaluation of the same developed by the World Bank, it was concluded that this curriculum had effects on the well-being of the participating adolescents, as well as on their academic performance.

Other initiatives that advanced and promoted socio-emotional skills in the case of Argentina were (among others): Network of Schools in the Province of Buenos Aires, and School of Teachers in Buenos Aires City. Both offer training that involves aspects of emotional development.



## Teachers' Well-being in Focus

More and more governments, institutions, academies, international organizations and civil society are concerned about the well-being of teachers, an issue that in this particular and critical scenario of the global COVID-19 pandemic receives special attention. Although the information on the state of teacher well-being is still insufficient when it comes to obtaining views at the national or global levels, there are different studies that address it. In these paragraphs we will show only a few cases derived from international inquiries and studies that show the need to work on promoting environments and habits of greater care and well-being as a strategic dimension still insufficiently contemplated of educational quality.

The “burnout syndrome”, or professional burnout syndrome, occurs when expectations in the professional field and the reality of daily work are unbalanced. This has consequences not only for the person who goes through it, but also the other actors of the institution, the students, the other teachers and the links with the educational community are affected.



Today more than ever, it is key to pay attention to any situation that could end up affecting the emotional health of teachers.

## Teachers and stress

- Burnout syndrome, as we have already pointed out, is explained on the basis of three dimensions (Jennings 2019): burnout, depersonalization and ineffectiveness. What happens is that the persons emotionally distance themselves from their work in order to cope with the workload, put distance between themselves and their students, actively ignoring them, and this adds up to a feeling of incompetence and failure in their work.
- It manifests as a response to chronic work stress, producing negative attitudes and feelings towards the people with whom one works and towards the professional role itself.
- When it occurs, a loss of motivation and commitment of teachers with their daily work is generated (Muñoz Illanes, 2020).

Several studies highlight the social value that teachers give to their own professional practice. In "X-ray of teacher happiness in Chile" carried out by Choose to Educate (Orrego, 2018), it is highlighted that 90% of the teachers surveyed believe that their profession has high social benefits, for their students and also, their families. However, this perception is in tension with other findings that refer to stress states of teachers. The same study by Choose to Educate shows that 1 in 2 teachers in Chile say they are stressed and refer to the lack of time to prepare, review and design their pedagogical activities, to face new problems and challenges for which they do not necessarily feel prepared, among other causal factors of this problem.

Another study in Chile by Team Educate and Adimark Gft (Index Choose to Educate, 2015) showed that "teachers are professionals who enjoy their work in the classroom; however, they are inserted



in a system that hinders their optimal performance ". The Census on the Quality of Life of Teachers (Census of Teachers on Quality of Life, 2019), indicates that "36.7% of teachers say that stress affects their professional work"; 39% of teachers spend 1 to 2 hours a day spending time with their family; 43.8% of teachers sleep less than six hours a day; 34% of teachers have between 1 to 2 hours a week to do recreational and leisure activities.

The international TALIS study (TALIS 2018 Results, 2018) promoted by the OECD is the first international survey at a global level that analyzes teacher's work and how it is organized from the perspective of teachers and school leaders. The study, among other dimensions, tries to answer the following question: How is teacher stress related to their work? To do this, the four stress elements were grouped on a scale: the degree to which teachers experience stress in their work; if work leaves room for personal time; the impact on their mental health and the impact on their physical health. The regression results show a significant negative association between teacher well-being and stress and teacher job satisfaction and self-efficacy. Teachers with higher stress levels tend to report lower job satisfaction. This relationship is valid for all TALIS countries and economies. The report highlights that similar results are found in other studies that show the interconnection between job satisfaction and stress, and the following are cited: Betoret, 2009; Collie, Shapka and Perry, 2012; Desrumaux et al., 2015.

Most teachers say that they joined the profession to contribute to society and make a difference in the lives of children and young people; and for most teachers, high levels of administrative work are a much greater source of stress than long hours of classroom instruction. Similarly, job satisfaction is higher when teachers are supported in their professional growth, so it is worthy to transform schools into intellectually engaging spaces where professional development can flourish.

Beyond this, a collaborative school culture shows a strong association with teacher self-efficacy, so schools can support teachers by encouraging more professional collaboration with one another. According to TALIS, about 1 in 5 teachers do not feel that they work in a collaborative school culture characterized by mutual support, and only 28% lead classes as a team at least once a month. TALIS also shows that nearly three-quarters of the teachers who received feedback on their work found it useful in improving their practice, suggesting that a culture of regular feedback can help develop an ecosystem of continuous learning (Schleicher, 2018).

In all professions there is good stress and bad stress. Teachers are busy people, but if they feel satisfied, stimulated and happy, the stress they may experience should not have such negative consequences. However, the stress that prevents you from combining professional and private life will never be healthy, since it causes diseases or translates into physical or psychological disorders. TALIS data shows that those with high stress are twice as likely to say they intend to drop out of school within five years. It is often said that teachers today have more responsibilities than those of a generation ago.

These include, among others, more administrative work, differentiated instruction for increasingly diverse groups of students, additional social services, and greater accountability. In fact, TALIS 2018 reveals that nearly one in five teachers in OECD countries report suffering from a high level of stress derived from work. Teachers cite among their main sources of stress having too much administrative work, being held accountable for student achievement, and keeping up with the changing requirements imposed by the governments of their countries. Teachers who say they spend the most time on administrative tasks are most likely to indicate that they are under a lot of stress.

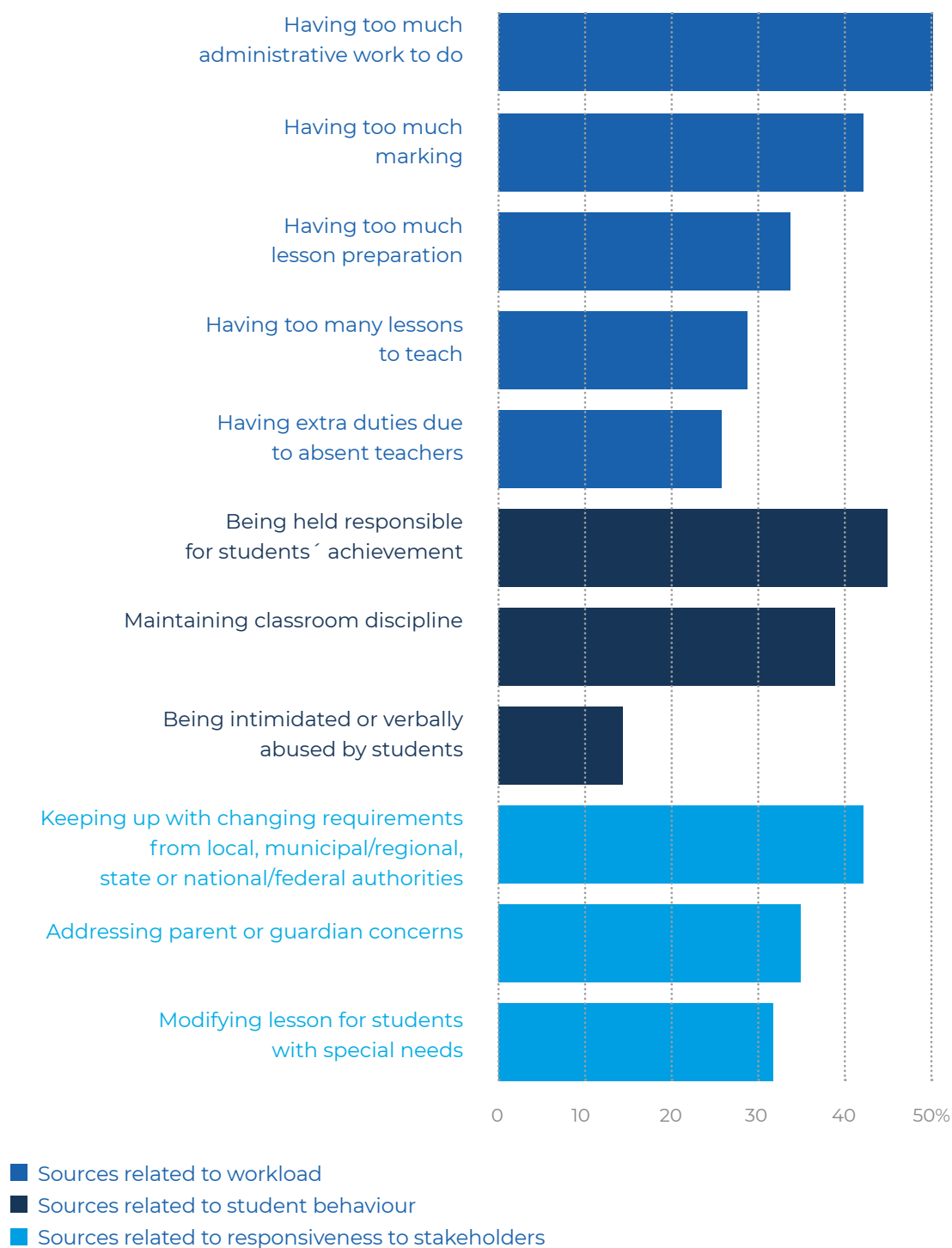


Relieving stress for teachers, or at least offering tools or skills that they can use on their own, is the responsibility of school principals. However, school leaders will not be able to help their workers if they are not aware that they are under stress. Part of the responsibility is also with the teachers, who should try to identify the reasons for this stress and communicate it to the principals. For the latter it will be useful, especially in large schools, to check how their workers are at least once a year to understand the levels of stress in their center. This is easy to do through staff well-being surveys, which should be simple to complete and conducted during a regular staff meeting. Thus, they will not increase the workload of teachers, causing even more stress (TALIS Teacher Guide, 2018).

An inquiry carried out in Argentina, promoted by the Living Gratefully Foundation and the Cognitive Sciences Laboratory in alliance with Universities and civil society organizations, proposed to obtain information on aspects of teacher well-being in the context of COVID-19 and mandatory quarantine. The closure of schools determined that the educational community, in all countries, adapt its practices, calendars and organization to sustain and make education possible in isolation in non-contact formats.

## Teachers' sources of stress

Percentage of lower secondary teachers for whom the following are sources of stress "quite a bit" or "a lot" (OECD average-31)



Values are grouped by type of source and, within each group, ranked in descending order of the percentage of lower secondary teachers reporting that the corresponding activities are a source of stress "quite a bit" or "a lot".

Source: OECD, TALIS 2018 Database, Table II.2.43. StatLink: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888934083392>

In the Argentine case, although in recent years, the access and integration of ICTs to educational institutions was part of the agenda of national educational policies and it was expanding in the territory and institutions, the possibility that technology was the main resource to maintain the so called pedagogical continuity was never an issue to guarantee education. In this way, almost no educational level was prepared to teach and learn at a distance remotely. Governments and educational institutions, teachers, students and families have responded actively and with enormous efforts to make educational continuity possible in COVID-19 context. Different studies show the gaps between institutions when it comes to providing pedagogical continuity in the establishments.

Simultaneously with these challenges, these experiences are currently traversed by a context marked by uncertainty in which teachers approach their task from a distance and accompany the learning processes of students who are also traversed by new dynamics, difficulties that bring emergency and emotional wear. In 50% of households, greater moments of arguments and anger are perceived between adults and in 30% between adults and children. In addition, 36% of adolescents present some negative feeling, with 2 out of 10 feeling scared, 15.7% distressed, 13% feeling indifferent and 6.3% depressed. Almost one in two adolescents surveyed said they believe that they or someone in their family could be infected (UNICEF, 2020).

The study consisted of a survey that sought to inquire about well-being in COVID contexts and obtain information on pedagogical continuity for the surveyed teachers. The analysis that we highlight below covers first all the respondents and then a section on the teacher respondents who reached 5,921 practicing teachers and represent 56% of the total population covered by the study. This group of teachers lead classes at all levels of the educational system,





but mostly concentrates on basic education (76%), while almost a quarter teach at the higher university and non-university level (24%).

The scales applied in the survey were: CERQ (Cognitive Emotional Regulation questionnaire) that inquires about emotional regulation, PTGI (post-traumatic growth inventory) to weigh post-traumatic growth and CSC (self-compassion questionnaire) on Self-compassion.



## CERQ Scale

This scale measures emotional regulation, evaluating adaptive strategies and maladaptive strategies. The term emotional regulation refers to the ability to notice, monitor, understand and modify the emotional response in pursuit of our goals or to be in tune with our motivations (Chris Irons, 2019). According to James Gross, it is a process by means of which people can modify:

- the type of emotion they are having
- when they have an emotion
- the way in which they experience an emotion
- the way in which they express or use that emotion

Although emotions are often triggered automatically, this does not mean that we cannot influence them. The strategies we use to effectively manage emotions can be maladaptive, generating suffering in ourselves and or in others.

The Cognitive Emotional Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ) was designed to investigate the cognitive processes that people tend to use when experiencing negative events. Emotions can be regulated through cognition (eg, positive reassessment and perspective), and this process is defined as a cognitive emotional regulation strategy. CERQ evaluates these strategies for cognitive regulation of emotions, grouping them into:

Adaptive strategies: Putting it in perspective: leaving aside the seriousness of a situation or emphasizing relativity when compared to other events; positive focus: thinking about pleasant topics or experiences, instead of thinking about the actual event; Positive reinterpretation: giving a positive meaning to an unpleasant event; Refocus on planning: thinking about the steps to take and how to handle the negative event; Acceptance: recognizing reality, with an attitude of openness to experience.

Maladaptive strategies: Self-blame: thoughts that attribute the cause of the negative event and the consequent unpleasant emotion to the person himself; Blaming others: thoughts that blame others. Rumination: overthinking about the feelings and problems associated with a negative or unpleasant event; Catastrophizing: those thoughts that explicitly highlight the fear of some previous experience.

The use of different strategies has different implications for adaptive functioning. It is important to note that people who cannot regulate their emotions, or who use ineffective or maladaptive strategies,



are at higher risk of emotional disturbances. Dysfunctional regulation of emotions has been related to difficulties in coping with stressful or anxiety-provoking events and in the development and maintenance of anxiety disorders (Sheppes, Suri & Gross, 2015). In general, guilt, rumination, and catastrophizing are related to depression, anxiety, distress, and anger.

## **Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory, PTGI**

The scale measures: life changes and strengths, new possibilities, learning, openness to others, spirituality, total post-traumatic growth.

Post-traumatic growth is defined as the manifestation of positive cognitive and behavioral changes that arise after experiencing a perceived traumatic event. Tedeschi and Calhoun, developed in 1996 the Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory (ICPT), which is currently an instrument dedicated to studying the positive personal changes that occur after experiencing a situation perceived as traumatic.

According to Calhoun and Tedeschi, changes can generally be observed in 3 dimensions that allow the post-traumatic growth of an individual:

Changes in oneself (self-perception), feeling strong and secure, with a greater capacity to face adversity in the future.

- Changes in interpersonal relationships, greater closeness with family and friends, and a better disposition to receive help.
- Changes in spirituality and philosophy of life, greater appreciation of one's own existence, enjoying every moment and taking life more calmly.

In the last 20 years since the recent emergence of positive psychology led by the works of Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000), researchers and psychologists have begun to study human strengths and potentials from the rigor of the scientific method. They refer to the use of external and/or internal resources, the development of strength and personal growth from facing situations classified as critical or adverse. Post-traumatic growth indicators have been found to be directly associated with concepts such as resilience, life satisfaction, and well-being. (Triplett, Tedeschi, Cann, Calhoun, Reeve, 2012).

## SCS Scale

This scale measures self-kindness, self-judgment, shared humanity, isolation, and mindfulness. Compassion is defined as sensitivity to the suffering of oneself and others and a commitment to alleviate and prevent it. Compassion has three flows, directing compassion towards others, receiving compassion or directing compassion towards ourselves, the latter we call self-compassion, that is, we become sensitive to our own suffering, we look for ways to connect with our pain, and then we develop skills and the motivation to alleviate and prevent it.

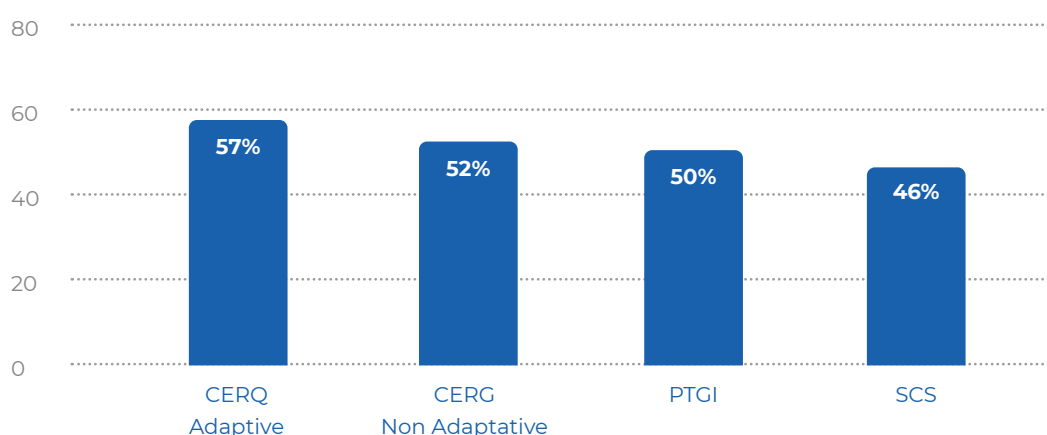
According to Kristin Neff Self-pity is made up of three factors:

- Mindfulness or full attention: the ability to openly observe our experience without judging or identifying with it.
- Shared humanity: it consists in reversing the tendency to isolate ourselves when we are suffering, thinking “only these things can happen to me”, our suffering is part of life.
- Kindness: implies an attitude of care, warmth and understanding towards my own suffering.

## Main findings

Then, the results achieved in the 3 scales mentioned for the 10,549 people who voluntarily responded to the survey will be analyzed below. First, the results of the 4 constructs that these scales measure (adaptive strategies, maladaptive strategies, post-traumatic growth and self-compassion) are analyzed and then the results of the factors that make up each of these 4 constructs are analyzed in detail.

**Graph 1. Percentage of respondents above the mean according to constructs of emotional well-being.**



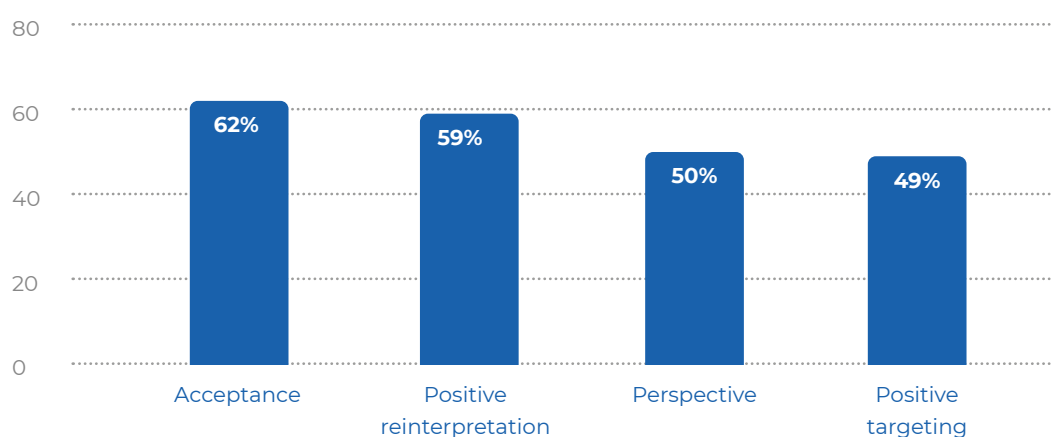
Graph 1 shows the percentages of respondents who exceeded the mean in each of the constructs that measured the applied scales. Of the overall respondents, 56.51% exceeded the average in terms of adaptive strategies, that is, more than half exceeded the average in relation to their ability to; put a situation in perspective, have a positive focus, positively reinterpret an unpleasant event, refocus on planning, and accept reality. As can be seen in the graph, adaptive strategies are those that concentrate a higher proportion of respondents above the mean.

For their part, 51.64% of the respondents were higher than the average with regard to maladaptive strategies - blaming themselves

for a negative event, blaming others, rummaging about a negative event and highlighting the fear of a previous experience (catastrophizing) -. A proportion just less than half of the respondents exceeded the average post-traumatic growth (49,74), which refers to the possibility of manifesting positive changes at the cognitive and behavioral level after experiencing an event perceived as traumatic. Finally, among the more than 10,549 respondents to the survey, 46.44% exceed the average on the Self-compassion scale that measures the sensitivity to suffering of oneself and others and the commitment to relieve and/or prevent it.

When analyzing the results according to factors that make up the adaptive strategies construct, it is observed that acceptance is the factor with a higher proportion of respondents that exceed the mean (62.49%), followed by positive reinterpretation. In the case of perspective and positive targeting, only 50% of the respondents exceed the average.

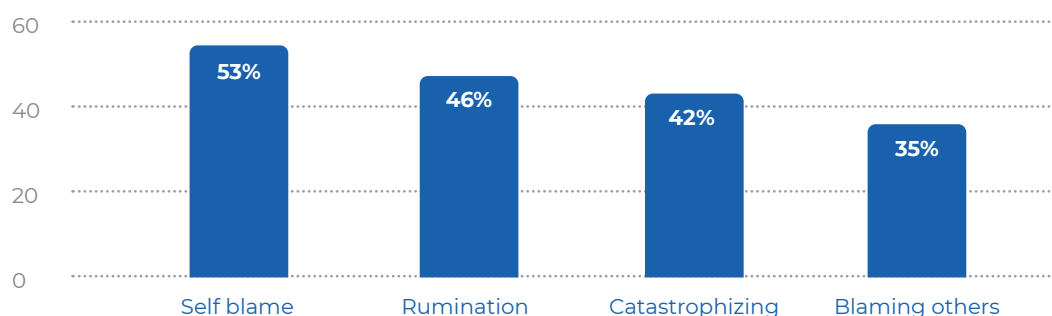
**Graph 2. Percentage of respondents above the mean according to adaptive strategies factors**



The graph below analyzes the proportion of respondents that exceeds the mean for each of the factors of the maladaptive strategies construct: self-blame, rumination, catastrophizing, blaming others. It is observed that self-blame is the factor with the highest

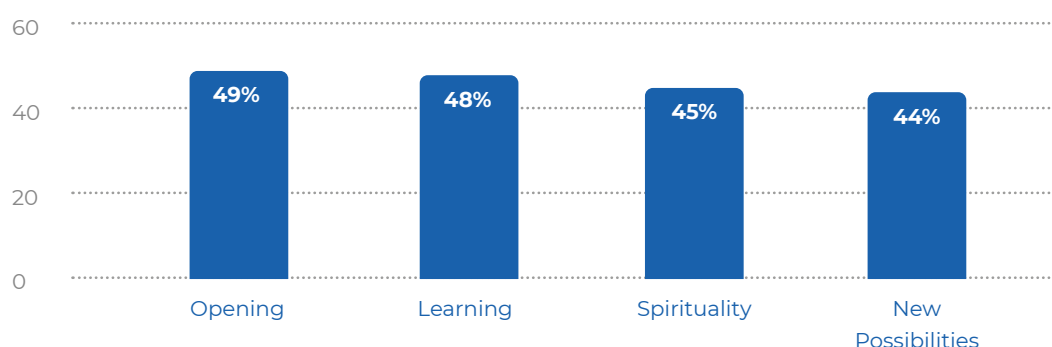
proportion of respondents above the mean (52.87%), while only 35.22% exceeds the mean in the factor of blaming others.

**Graph 3. Percentage of respondents above the mean according to maladaptive strategies factors**



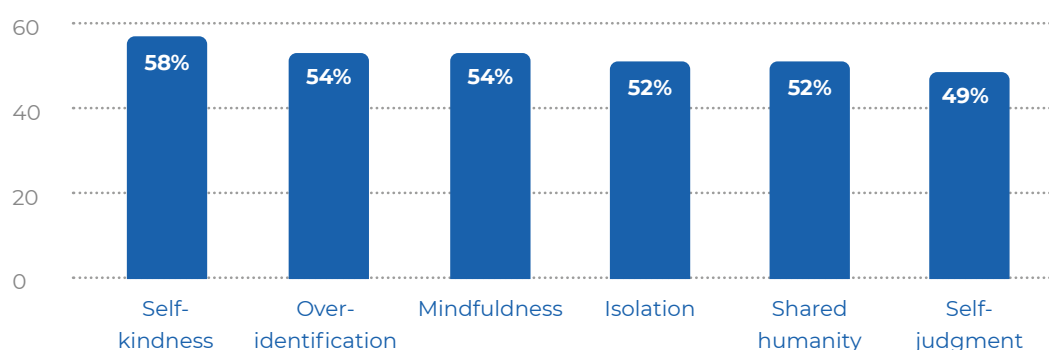
The proportion of respondents above the average in the different factors that make up post-traumatic growth is relatively even, around 44% (spirituality and new possibilities) and 48% (openness and learning).

**Graph 4. Percentage of respondents above the mean according to post-traumatic growth factors**



Regarding the Self-compassion factors, in all cases at least 50% of the respondents exceeded the average with the exception of self-judgment (48.81%). Among the factors with the highest proportion of respondents above the average is self-kindness, over-identification and mindfulness.

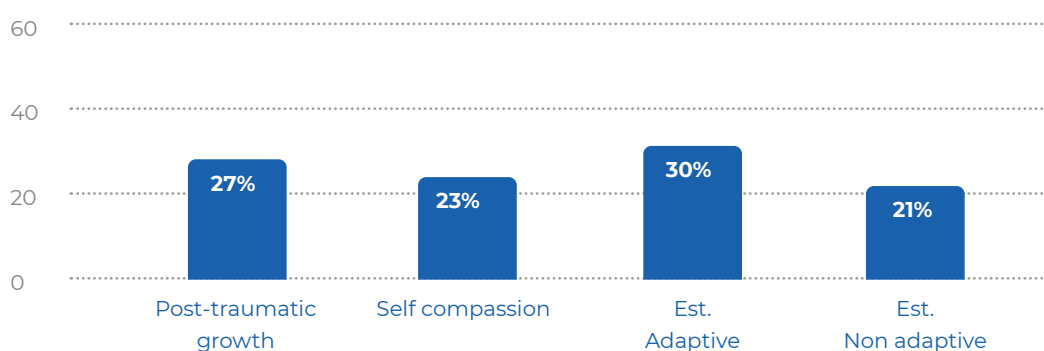
**Graph 5. Percentage of respondents above the mean according to Self-compassion factors**



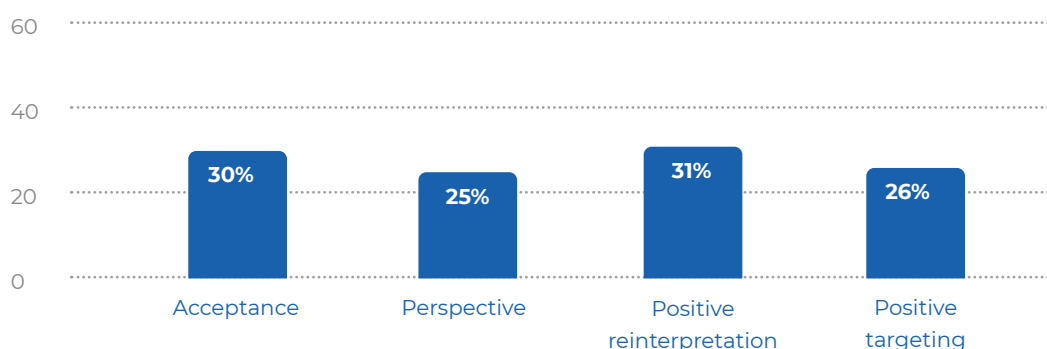
## The findings in the surveyed teachers

In the first place, when analyzing the percentage of responding teachers who exceed the mean in the different constructs that measured the scales, it is observed that in no case do they reach 30%, with adaptive strategies being the construct with the highest percentage of teachers above the average, with 29.71%. The lowest proportion is concentrated in maladaptive strategies with 21.49%.

**Graph 6. Percentage of responding teachers above the mean according to constructs of emotional well-being**

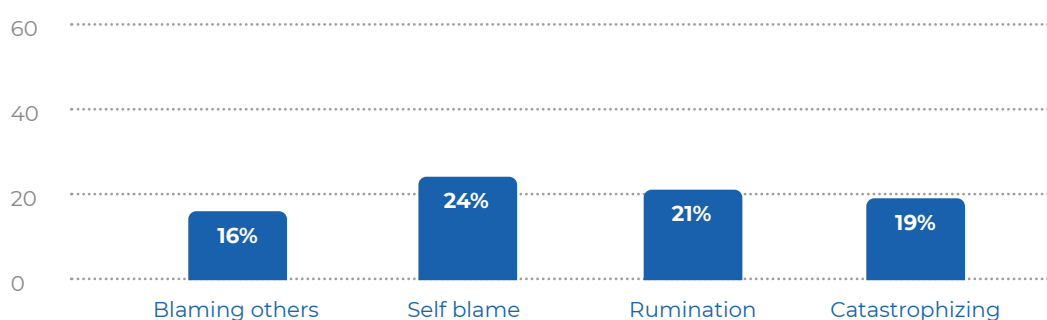


**Graph 7. Percentage of responding teachers above the mean according to adaptive strategies factors (CERQ)**



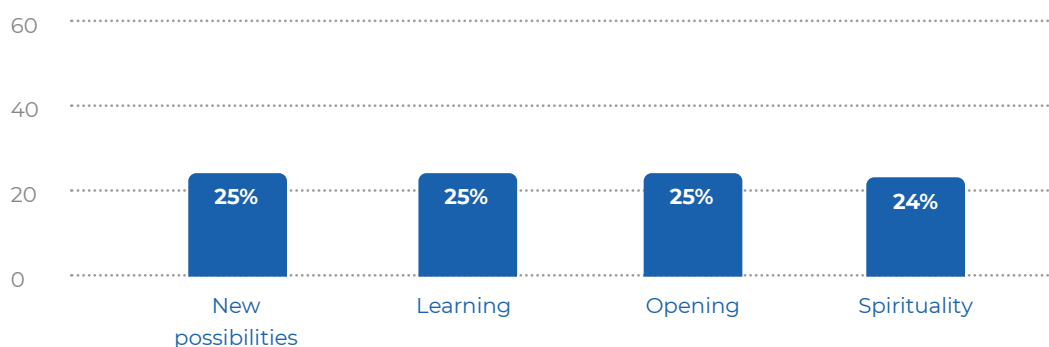
The graph below analyzes the proportion of responding teachers that exceeds the mean for each of the factors of the adaptive strategies construct. It is observed that positive reinterpretation is the factor with the highest proportion of teachers who exceed the average (31.42%), while only 24.82% exceed the average in the perspective factor.

**Graph 8. Percentage of responding teachers above the mean according to maladaptive strategies factors (CERQ)**



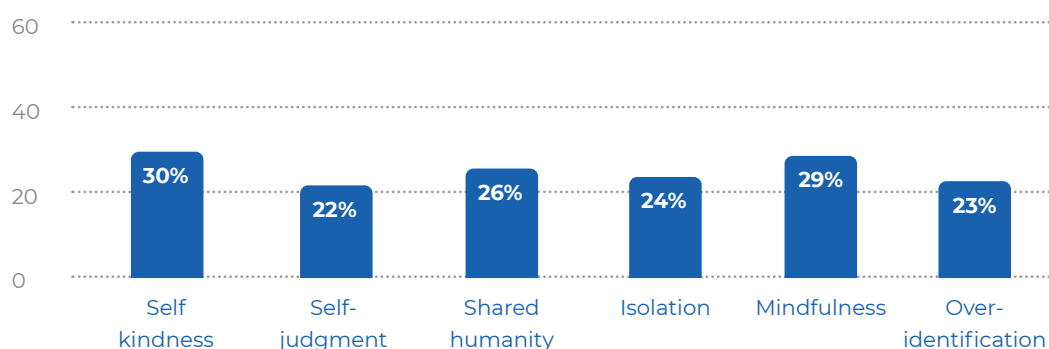
When analyzing the results according to factors that make up the maladaptive strategies construct, it is observed that, in general, the proportion of teachers who exceed the average for these factors is low. Self-blame is the factor with the highest proportion of respondents who are above the mean (23.78%), followed by rumination (20.71%). In the case of catastrophizing and blaming others, these percentages assume 18.66% and 15.69% respectively.

**Graph 9. Percentage of responding teachers above the average according to post-traumatic growth factors (PTGI)**



The proportion of respondents above the average in the different factors that make up post-traumatic growth is relatively even, around 23% (spirituality) and 25% (openness, learning and new possibilities).

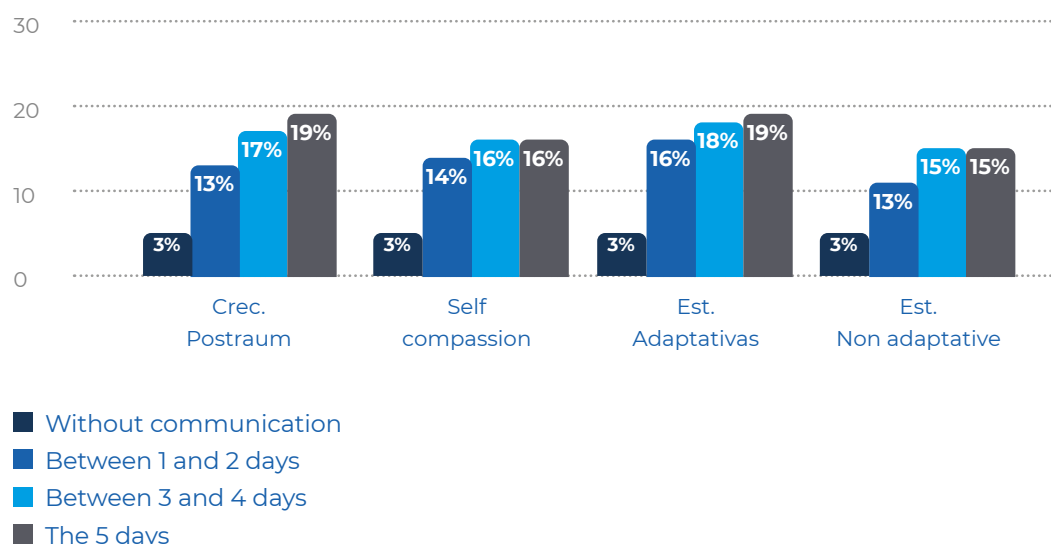
**Graph 10. Percentage of responding teachers above the average according to Self-compassion factors**



Regarding the factors of Self-compassion, the only one that exceeds 30% of the responding teachers above the average is Self-kindness (30.24%), while self-judgment and overidentification are those that assume the lowest proportions.



**Graph 11. Percentage of responding teachers above the mean by construct according to frequency of communication with students in the context of pandemic and isolation**



As analyzed in the previous section, when asking teachers how often they came into contact with their students, while 33% reported contacting them 5 days a week, 32.5% of the respondents affirmed that between 3 and 4 days a week, 28.5% between 1 and 2 days and the remaining 6% had not been able to contact them as of May.

When analyzing the 4 constructs of emotional well-being surveyed (post-traumatic growth, self-compassion, adaptive strategies, maladaptive strategies) in this study in terms of the frequency of contact with students, it is possible to observe that, in general, the higher the frequency of contact, the proportion of teachers who exceed the average in the different constructs analyzed is higher.

In the case of post-traumatic growth, among those teachers who came into contact with their students 5 days a week, 18.5% exceeded the average, while among those who came into contact between 1 and 2 days this percentage falls to 13 %. Only 2.7% of teachers who did not have the opportunity to contact their students exceeded the average in terms of post-traumatic growth.



With regard to self-compassion, the differences according to the frequency of contact with students are similar, although the percentage of responding teachers that exceeds the average among those who contacted every day of the week is somewhat lower (16.3%).

Regarding adaptive strategies, it is observed that of the teachers who contacted their students 5 days a week, 19.3% exceeded the average, in the case of those who contacted between 3 and 4 days a week the 17.8%, while 15.9% of those who contacted between 1 and 2 days exceeded the average. Among those who did not have communication with their students, the percentage that exceeds the average is only 2.7%.

Finally, with regard to maladaptive strategies, the percentages of teachers who exceed the average in the case of this construct are lower than in the other constructs, and do not present great differences according to the frequency of contact with their students. Only 3% of teachers who did not come into contact with their students exceed the mean of maladaptive strategies scores.

In several countries, studies are being carried out with different focuses in the framework of COVID-19. In Mexico, for example, communication companies, the National Institute of Public Health (INSP) and the Government of Mexico City recently established an agreement to integrate a public health study that delves into compliance of prevention measures. EduPlena, an organization that is part of Proyecto Educativo S.C., should be highlighted as a precedent in inquiries about teacher well-being in Mexico. ([www.proyectoeducativo.org](http://www.proyectoeducativo.org)), which in addition to the previous study that it integrates in 2017, as a result of the earthquake that several states in southern Mexico suffered, inquired about the need to address the emotional state of teachers and students who had had traumatic experiences during the mentioned event. In Colombia, a study by the universities of Los Andes, Rosario, Washington and Alianza EFI seeks to collect information and stories on how people cope with COVID-19.

To conclude this section, the evidence shows that this critical context derived from the pandemic eroded the emotional health of the population in general and that of teachers in particular. The evidence also shows that teachers with better job well-being generate better learning opportunities for themselves and for their students. Absenteeism, teacher rotation and even withdrawal from the profession often spring from emotional health problems. Teachers who feel emotionally well indicate greater exposure to constructive comments from their superiors and have greater opportunities to raise criticism in their schools and, therefore, influence decisions that are relevant to their professional practice. The emotional dimension must be integrated into the group of factors that undoubtedly influence a better education for all.

Presence in Education Program is a contribution to this purpose.

## Programs' Purpose Presence in Education

The Presence in Education Program is a training initiative aimed at teachers and heads in order to promote care habits and teacher well-being through the acquisition of habits, capacities, skills and competences leading to individual and institutional changes. Presence is a key to self-awareness and emotional self-regulation; and, at the same time, it advances towards collaborative intervention strategies that have an impact on improving the climate, communication and increasing proposals for institutional well-being.

More and more governments, institutions, unions, academies, international organizations and civil society are concerned about the well-being of teachers. The evidence shows that the stress teachers go through can be a threat to the health of professionals and it can also lead to consequences in their practices with an impact on students learning opportunities, in exchange with colleagues and supervisors and even on the bonds with the rest of the educational community. The particular and critical scenario of the global COVID-19 pandemic added to an already worrying situation, an additional dimension of relevance and complexity.

The professional burnout syndrome occurs when expectations between the professional field and the reality of daily work and its interrelationship with daily life become unbalanced for a long time. It is explained on the basis of three dimensions (P. Jennings 2019): exhaustion, depersonalization and ineffectiveness. What happens is that the person emotionally distances himself from his work in order to cope with the workload, puts distance between himself and his students, actively ignoring them, and this adds up to a feeling of incompetence and failure in their work. Some of its manifestations are:



- ➔ There is a response to chronic work stress, producing negative attitudes and feelings towards the people with whom one works and towards the professional role itself.
- ➔ When it occurs, a loss of motivation is generated and can affect the teachers commitment with their daily practice.

The high administrative work, demands on results, lack of time with their own families and their free time, insufficient sleep, little participation in decision-making, are usually present in teachers voices, among others, when identifying causes of their exhaustion. These manifestations usually translate into high absenteeism, school rotation, poor classroom or institutional climate, extended sick leaves, and even quitting of the profession a few years after initiation.

Teachers' well-being is crossed by a multiplicity of factors, among which are fair remuneration for their work, social value, professional career, working conditions in general, infrastructure and equipment conditions, social context, among others recognized. To these factors, today we add the emotional dimension, recognized in all areas as a dimension that also determines personal care and well-being with an impact on improving educational quality.

The Presence Program invites you to an innovative training journey given in virtual environments, with content and sustained practices that make it possible to acquire the skills for self-knowledge, self-regulation and institutional change in favor of well-being.

It combines knowledge and practices in the field of emotional development and cognitive neurosciences, in new ways of collaborative work, ICT skills to train in virtual environments and devices for the improvement of personal well-being and change in the institution based on evidence and advances of expertise in these disciplines and knowledge.

The Presence Program has an ex ante, process and ex post monitoring and evaluation device, which enables feedback to all the actors involved and generation of knowledge about this dimension of educational quality.

Presence in Education aims to display the emotional dimension and the development of competences, skills and attitudes that facilitate and provide opportunities to:

- Be present with full attention in the different moments of professional practice.
- Develop self-awareness and emotional self-regulation.
- Display effective communication and attentive listening.
- Promote positive learning climates.
- Form communities of practice and collaborative work.
- Implement strategies for organizational change at the level of innovations demanded by the new education.
- Strengthen ICT skills and competences for education in virtual environments.
- Participate in an innovative platform of Network Response Circles.

## **What is the target population for training the Presence in Education Program?**

- The target population of the program are all the heads and teachers and other professionals of each school, Initial, Basic, Secondary Level and Teacher Training Institutions who have the will to participate in this training.
- Participation is by educational establishment for all teachers and other professionals of the institution.

## Program Characteristics

### Presence in Education

Based on the available evidence that supports the relevance of enabling being for a life with greater individual and social well-being, we developed the Presence in Education Program, with the aim of accompanying and strengthening the care and emotional well-being of heads and teachers, improving the institutional climate, the learning opportunities of students, and favoring institutional change with new elements, opening possibilities for innovation.

As we have already mentioned, education as an institution and its teachers face a global challenge that involves all citizens and governments. In a context where tension between societies and education is already present, the global crisis of the pandemic arose, which also forced unplanned vertiginous changes that modified paradigms and deep-rooted traditions and led to circumstances with still unexplored personal effects.

These scenarios demand to generate new training opportunities that deal with providing tools, experiences and knowledge to be able to face new challenges more than ever. This is a training that also enables us to rethink the meanings.

In a world where information is available to everyone, teachers are required to be comprehensively trained and in new competences and skills to be deployed by the younger generations.

The Presence in Education Program proposes the generation of a change both individually and collectively. It is an invitation to a formative journey, with a strong weight in the field of practices and experiences, which starting from a matrix of central presence at the beginning expands to the level of emotions, thoughts, the body and the senses and attitudes.

At the individual level, it is intended that the participants reach levels of self-knowledge and self-regulation that allow them to cultivate presence and acquire habits and attitudes for greater personal and social well-being. These skills and competences, as stated, also have a positive impact on pedagogical practice, promoting better climates in institutions and learning opportunities for students.

In turn (and unlike interventions and initiatives that address individual change), the Presence Program recognizes the relevance and weight of the context, and advances in its training proposal in a collective level, as a natural consequence of individual change.

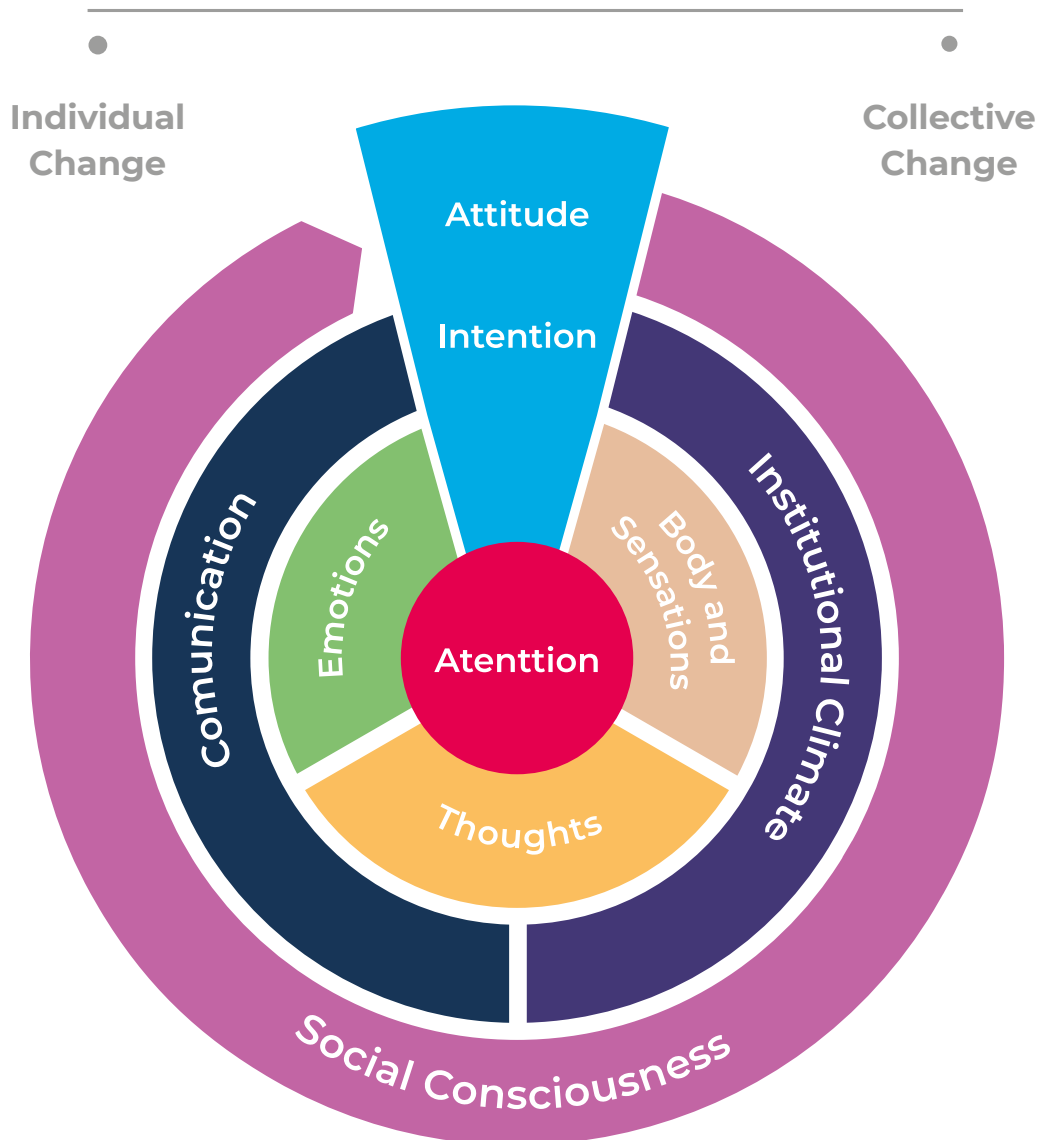


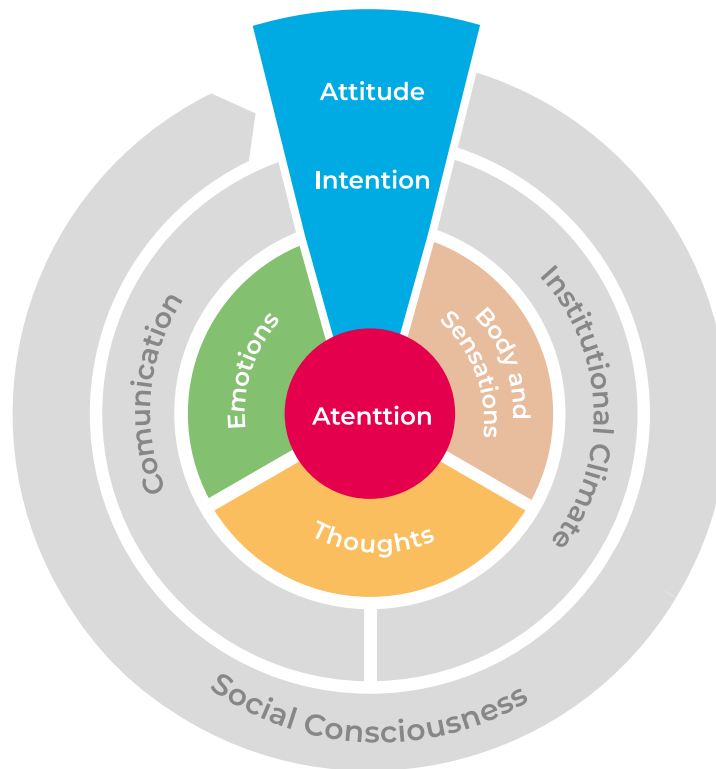
Presence promotes the acquisition of the habit of effective and empathetic communication in educational institutions, the constitution of collaborative work and the formation of communities of professional practice that lead to an improvement of the organizational climate and the development of a social conscience, providing tools - while allowing the institution to rethink and project and implement innovations for the benefit of the organization and its context.



An innovative contribution in this proposal is the incorporation of neuroscientific knowledge that shows the interrelationships between physical well-being and emotional well-being at the level of emotions, thought and attention. This results in a better appropriation of the skills, competences and attitudes that are intended to be cultivated.

## Presence Matrix





## Individual change

### Purpose



- Inhabiting the Presence matrix
- Display compassion and gratitude for personal and social well-being.

### Main contents

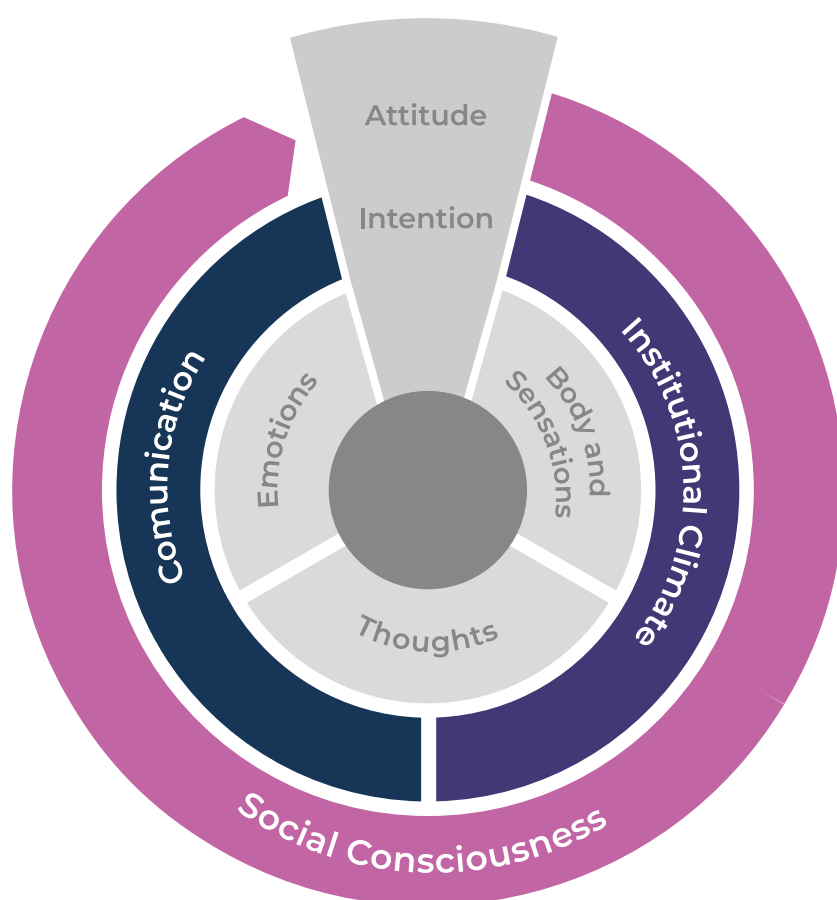


- Attention
- Interoception
- Thoughts
- Body and Sensations
- Emotions
- Com pass ion
- Affective validation
- Managing discomfort to wellbeing
- Attitudes presence matrix

### Main practices



- Body sean
- Breathing
- Mindful senses
- Observing thoughts
- Mindful dialogues oo Compassion
- Gratitude
- Affective regulation
- Calm Kit
- Stop look go



## Colective change

### Purpose



- Promote communities of practice that foster a good organizational "climate"
- Develop social consciousness within communities of practice to impact in a positive way the organization and its context.

### Main contents



- Listening and conversation levels
- Compassionate communication
- Culture vs Climate
- Social consciousness
- Professional practice community

### Main practices



- Reflection Circles
- Nonviolent communication
- Observation
- Organizational climate indicators and models analysis
- Project as a Social
- Intervention

## Presence Matrix

In the search path towards greater personal and collective well-being, the proposal emphasizes developing the skills of self-observation and self-regulation to acquire the necessary attitudes and skills that this purpose requires. To do this, we start from an articulating and enhancing construct of meaning called the Presence matrix.

This presence matrix functions as the guideline that connects the experiences and knowledge that make up the program. The matrix consists of the unfolding of conscious attention that arises from stopping our everyday rush. When we **stop**, we can **look** at our internal experience, our body and sensations, our emotions and our thoughts and, from there together with the intention that arises from looking, we can **go** on and assume attitudes that connect ourselves with the consciousness of the *Interser* (interdependence). In this way, the impact we have as individuals and communities within the environment in which we are immersed is evident.

The components that make up the matrix and the way in which we pay attention to each of them are the gears that build the ability to be present. Presence is what emerges by being with that which arises, while it is manifesting as it is, with no intention of changing it.

The matrix is constituted as a containing and integrative web of our being and our relationship with the world. From this journey, we will be able to go into the depths of its unfolding, being present.

Throughout the Presence Program we will work on the components of the matrix, to learn more about them, through experiences and knowledge that will allow us to make a conscious choice.

Presence, as we have already mentioned, is a proposal that invites an innovative training path aimed at teachers in terms of emotional

skills and competences and promotes individual and collective care attitudes. The program is trans-disciplinary and based on advances in science and streams of thought that address emotions, health and wellness, climates, and organizations with communities of practice. Its purpose is not to impose new theories, but to propose experiences and knowledge that benefit and accompany teachers in their daily practice and in the processes of change.

## Training focused on practice

Another characteristic of the Presence Program lies in the irreplaceable value placed on practice and experience. The proposal is not a training aimed to acquire contents only. On the contrary, its differentiating potential is configured through the experiences and practices that each actor goes through during the journey and the value that each one gives to them. Only through systematic practice can the purposes of self-knowledge and self-regulation that this initiative proposes be achieved.

Systematic practice allows us to transition from a temporal state to a permanent trait. When we practise, we intend to generate different states, such as being present, or certain attitudes such as kindness, gratitude. With time devoted practice, these states (which are temporary), are transformed into traits. That is, they go on to integrate more stable parts of the personality.

There are studies that analyze the times required to consolidate the transition from state to trait with daily practice; in general, it is not less than eight weeks (Goleman & Davidson, 2017). In education, cultivating the ability to be present produces, without a doubt, significant benefits in the short, medium and long term.

## Stop-Look-Go

Throughout Presence, the participants may come across the invitation to take the following three steps: Stop, Look, and Go. Unlike the other experiential and practical proposals offered by the program, this does not constitute a method: it is a pattern that underlies all practice.

Stop, look and go is an attunement to the natural flow of life. Only the first time it is experienced can it be thought of as practice. But in time, it becomes a way of interacting with the gift of life. A way of responding to the opportunities that life offers us at all times.

### Stop.

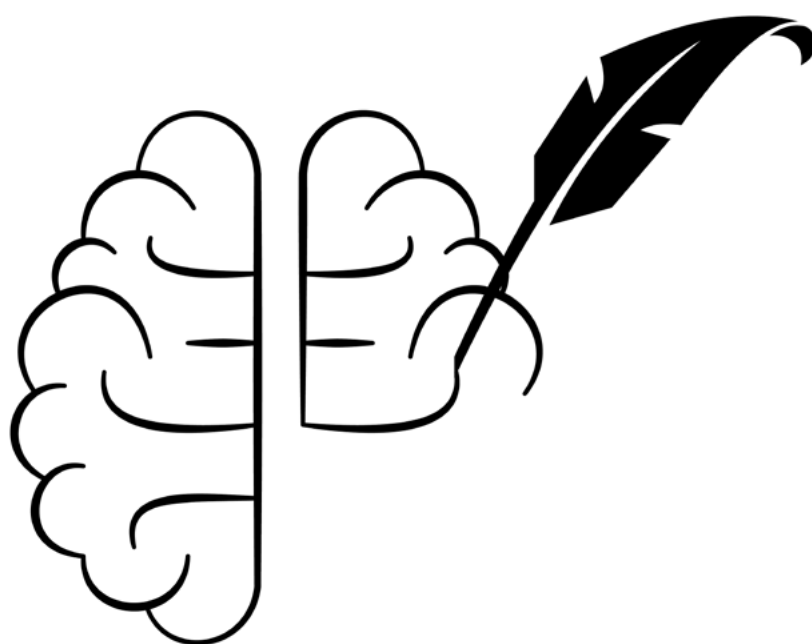
*Stop. Slow down and try to stop. Choose a time of day where you can, at least for a few moments, achieve an inner stillness that allows you to connect deeply with that moment.*

### Look.

*Anchored in your inner stillness, you can pay attention, with all your senses, to what life is offering and proposing to you at this precise moment. And so, everything that is emerging in your experience at this moment (thoughts, emotions, physical sensations), will be accepted and will serve as a guide to answer the mystery of life.*

### Go.

*By observing with all your senses, because you have been able to stop for a while, you respond to what life offers you. In tune with what life proposes, we are ready to go. There is no pre-established agenda.*



## Neurosciences contributions to the Program Presence in Education

Another differentiator in this training proposal lies in the incorporation of knowledge and practices that advances in neuroscience provide us with.

The evidence indicates that there are functional and structural changes in the brain that would be those that underlie the benefits observed in individuals who exercise attention, emotional regulation and perform decentralization practices.

The brain is constantly changing, it is neuroplastic. And this happens throughout life. It changes according to the experiences we are living. Neuroplasticity is the neurobiological basis for change. We are not normally aware of the power this process has for care and well-being.

In this sense, becoming familiar with how the mind works is a powerful tool for self-awareness and care.

Science proposes exercising the mind daily to cultivate attention, traits and attitudes of kindness, gratitude and compassion among other qualities that have the potential to transform not only ourselves, but also the world.

## **What are the contributions of the Presence Program to education in virtual environments?**

The program introduces and strengthens education in virtual environments from different angles:

- ➔ Presence contains a training module of contributions to education in virtual environments to strengthen knowledge and teaching skills so necessary in this scenario that they contribute to their daily professional practice.
- ➔ It provides a prior training to the start of training in the use of the platform to strengthen the skills of technological devices in the attendees in order to enable everyone to a training journey in a virtual environment.
- ➔ Finally, those establishments that join the development of a Wellbeing Improvement Project will participate in a virtual environment, the Learning Ecosystem, which consists of an open platform to work together with other institutions in community response circles.



## **What content does the Presence in Education Program address?**

We previously presented the presence matrix as the computer that encompasses the different dimensions and themes to achieve greater self-knowledge and self-regulation and to be able to acquire those skills and attitudes that promote care and well-being. This matrix, which marks the transition from individual change to collective change, unfolds starting from the center, which is Attention, and in an articulated path with meaning. It opens up to topics such as the body and the senses, thoughts, emotions and attitudes, as steps to achieve individual change. A journey towards collective change in terms of effective communication, institutional climate and social awareness also begins from there.

These areas of knowledge, experiences and practices are presented in the format of modules, each of them conceptual and practical.

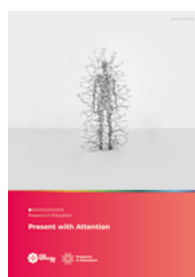
In addition, the Presence Program provides material with neuroscientific contributions about the mind and emotional development, educational strategies in virtual or blended contexts required by COVID-19 pandemic context, and a resource kit with more than 100 selected and developed practices to work among teaching teams, in the classroom with students and with the community.

# Contents that make up the Presence Program

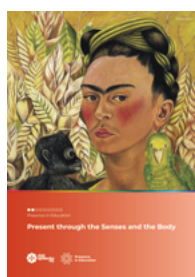
## Synthesis of the contents and experiences of Presence in Education



Presentation



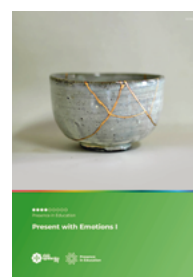
Present with Attention



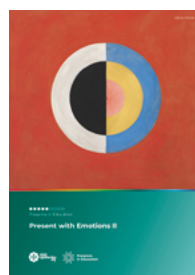
Present with the Senses and the Body



Present with Thoughts



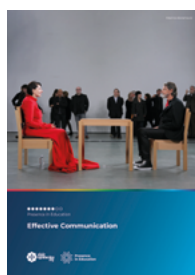
Present with Emotions I



Present with Emotions II



Present with Attitudes



Effective Communication



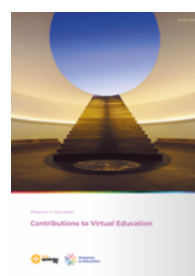
Institutional Climate



Social Consciousness



Neuroscience and Well-being



Virtual Education Contributions



Ecosystem



Resource Kit

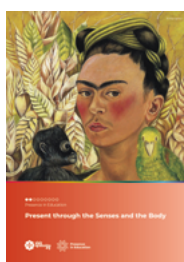


Present with  
Attention

**Present with Attention** is an invitation to explore new ways of inquiring about our experience, focusing on our attention and well-being, learning to perceive and be aware of the present moment and improve our emotional regulation to be more aware of our choices at every moment.

Cultivating presence with attention and intention allows us to choose more consciously how to act in each situation. Mindfulness is a way of inhabiting the present open to the moment available and aware of the different options to decide.

Some of the contents that are addressed throughout the module are: the definition of mindfulness and awareness of the moment; breathing as the focus of attention; formal and informal practice; the effects of mindfulness; the differences between focused and unfocused care; the process of attentional exercise.



Present with  
the Senses  
and the Body

**Present with the Senses and the Body** is an invitation to develop the ability to be present through an experiential practice; to understand how the deployment of conscious attention has an impact on our physical, emotional and cognitive dimensions, and how these affect each other. To know links and implications between neuroplasticity, attention and learning; and to experience emotional regulation mechanisms through formal and informal practices. In this framework, the following questions guide the journey throughout the module: How do we build the capacity to be

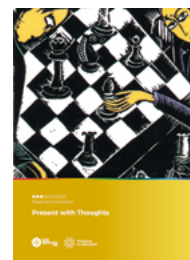
present with the senses and the body? How do we cultivate mindfulness and unfold our presence matrix for well-being? What mechanisms can we develop to self-regulate?

How does our mind work? What is the brain neuroplasticity process like and what is its relationship with attention?

Some of the contents that are addressed throughout the module are: mental filters and their mediation in the perception of the environment: “being” and “doing” modes; self-observation and breathing as ways of self-regulation; neuroplasticity and its relationship with learning and attention; mindfulness in everyday life, its possibilities and benefits.

**Present with Thoughts** is an invitation to identify our thoughts, observe them, allow them to flow, and learn to maintain the necessary distance so as not to “get tangled” in them. The mind gives meaning to our life and our being, generating stories that appear voluntarily or involuntarily, as thoughts. The mind is wonderful; the problem is believing that we ARE what we think. In this sense, decentralization alternatives are offered, which lead to greater well-being.

Some of the contents that are addressed throughout the module are: the world of “thinking” and the world of “feeling”; different types of thinking, their characteristics and functions; the



Present with Thoughts

experience of observing thoughts; "default" mode and "present" mode of thinking.



Present with Emotions I

**Present with Emotions I** is an invitation to learn to regulate our emotions and to manage our own resources, to deal with discomfort, from acceptance.

Being present with emotions allows us to focus on their characteristics, their regulation, our motivations and the acceptance of discomfort as a principle to maintain calm and health.

Some of the contents that are addressed throughout the module are: emotional regulation; the role of emotions; conscious observation of emotions; the brain and stress, tension and attention; management of discomfort.

Some of the contents that are addressed throughout the module are: emotional regulation; the role of emotions; conscious observation of emotions; the brain and stress, tension and attention; management of discomfort.



Present with Emotions II

**Present with Emotions II** is an invitation to learn about the emotion regulation systems; to develop forms of validation for self-regulation and to deploy compassion as a path to personal and social well-being.

Being present with emotions allows us to identify the characteristics of our internal regulation

systems and while balancing them, to achieve greater well-being; practice compassion towards ourselves, towards others and from others towards our person.

Some of the contents that are addressed throughout the module are: the three-emotion regulation systems: threat system, achievement and goal system, calm and security system; the autonomic nervous system and our capacity to intervene on its functioning; knowledge about polyvagal theory; emotional validation; compassion and well-being; shared humanity.

**Present with Attitudes** is an invitation to articulate and synthesize the contents that have been worked on so far, to redefine them and make the transition from the personal aspect to the professional and collective one, based on a conscious attitudinal practice.

When we cultivate presence it is important to do so with certain attitudes that require dedication and commitment. These attitudes are interconnected and interdependent, that is, they support each other when practicing them.

Some of the contents that are addressed throughout the module are: attention, intention and attitude to practice mindfulness; the value of silence and wonder; calm, trust and care.



Present with Attitudes



Effective  
Communication

**Effective Communication** seeks to contribute to the development of interpersonal skills for the improvement of communication within educational institutions.

Communication goes through and conditions our actions and relationships, and often reflects resistance, discomfort, and emotional states.

The purpose is to deepen compassionate communication, become aware of our blind spots when communicating, and establish deep levels of listening.

Some of the contents that are addressed throughout the module are: the systemic approach and the axioms of communication; guidelines for expression and productive inquiry; the quality of our conversations; different communication models.



Institutional  
Climate

**Institutional Climate** seeks to contribute to the development of socio-emotional skills that facilitate the integration of our own resources to promote individual and collective potential. In this sense, we understand that the competences we develop not only strengthen our sense of being, but also contribute to improving the community to which we belong.

In this framework, the following question is reflected: Can we invent a more powerful and meaningful way of working together if we change our belief system, our way of looking at the world, our position in the face of the complexity of today's world?

The general goal is to promote institutional improvement and well-being based on the awareness of the impact that “my being and my being here” has on interpersonal relationships and the construction of the organizational climate.

Some of the contents that are addressed throughout the module are: the emotional impact of our professional practice on learning; implicit mental models; the dimensions of the organizational culture and its connection with practices; collaborative work and the formation of learning communities.

**Social Consciousness** seeks to contribute to the collective construction of sustainable groups, communities and societies that enrich with their action to contextual well-being. It is an invitation to ponder the way we relate to one another once more, understanding that relationships have an impact on the institutions of which we are part.



Social  
Consciousness

The goal is to achieve individual and collective flourishing from a deep social reorganization that deploys the resources that are dormant within each establishment.

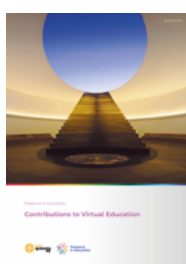
Some of the contents that are addressed throughout the module are: interactions that nurture the institution; institutional change; intentional evolution; communities of practice; social transformation projects.





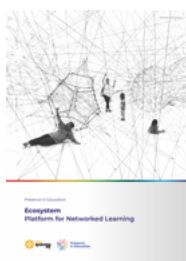
Neuroscience and Well-being

**Neuroscience and Well-being:** this document systematizes the contents of cognitive neuroscience and its interrelationships with well-being present throughout the Presence in Education Program. It is a contribution to self-knowledge in order to achieve states of greater well-being.



Virtual Education Contributions

**Virtual Education Contributions:** here you will find support, notes and resources to strengthen and continue thinking about education in virtual environments. The current scenario demands ICT skills, competences and resources that must be strengthened by teachers.



Ecosystem

**Ecosystem:** it consists of a platform with an innovative methodology that facilitates the online search for answers using the collective intelligence of the community for the challenges presented by educational establishments.



Resource Kit

**Resource Kit:** it has got more than 100 practices and resources that promote experiential learning experiences. Practices are essential, both for individual change and for collective work at school.

## The Presence Program formation modality

### What is the training modality like? How long does it last?

- The modality is in a virtual environment in a hyper-classroom space with co-teaching facilitators through a platform that enables expanded work spaces and in teams.
- A training plan is contemplated that includes around 14 virtual sessions, at the rate of a weekly meeting of two hours and participation in tutorials that accompany the process. At the end of the training sessions, participants are invited to project a proposal for institutional change through communities of practice to improve care and well-being.
- The Program potentially contemplates the development of 2 full-time face-to-face meetings in combination with virtuality - depending on the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic -.
- Training enables recognition by its length and time, according to regulations of each government or educational supervision, so that teachers obtain their respective score or recognition for their professional career.
- The proposal invites you to know and go through experiences by means of practices that give rise to the acquisition of skills, competences and habits leading to greater care and well-being at the individual and group level in order to provide better learning opportunities for students and greater welfare in the institution. Due to its characteristics, it demands that the participants attend a weekly virtual session and one of the tutorials, and be prepared to exercise in the practices entrusted in each meeting.
- Those attending the training will receive the necessary inputs, guides and supports from the Presence Program team to undergo their training.



## The institutional project of change for well-being

- In the final stage of the Presence Program, knowledge and practices will be acquired to form communities of practice and collaborative work. The program contemplates inviting schools to join a Virtual Ecosystem that contains innovative methodologies in its platform to rethink alternatives to problems that arise around the problems of institutional care and well-being in learning circles-community response circles.
- During the development and implementation period of the Project that may start in the Ecosystem, a monitoring instance is foreseen for a period of 6 months - after training - by professionals from the Presence Program.
- The final activity of the program that invites the establishments to implement in the community of professional practice an innovative project in the field of skills and competences that favor the care and well-being of the educational community extends the Presence Program in its full format (training plus project institutional) to 1 period of 9 months: about 14 weeks of training and six months of development and implementation of the Project to improve care and well-being. This last instance is optional.

## The Presence Program sustainability

The Innovation and Evidence Center of Living Gratefully Foundation plans to offer governments that join the initiative three supplementary and/or alternative proposals for the use of the program in the educational community:

- Training educational system agents to join the team of facilitators and provide installed capacity.
- Providing content and technical assistance so that the agenda items of the program are incorporated into initial teacher training in teacher training institutes.
- Providing technical assistance to create space for teacher care policies in the government sphere.
- Supporting research and evaluation policies in the promotion of 21st Century Skills.

## Evaluation Model of Presence Program

The evaluation process is simultaneously incorporated into the intervention design as an integral part of the execution of the program. An evaluation model is proposed to identify the results of the intervention and provide information for feedback and improvement of the program and the participating institutions.

At the same time, the monitoring of Presence in Education will be oriented to obtain information on the intervention to support the program in decision-making during implementation, promoting reflection, detecting achievements, challenges and vacancies based on the data that the intervention itself develops on its progress.

The impact evaluation, in turn, will be the space for the creation and dissemination of knowledge in order to contribute to the critical mass and scientific knowledge on these issues of recent evidence.

## Goals

The purpose of the evaluation is the Presence in Education Program as an intervention to improve personal and collective well-being, as an innovation program that seeks to contribute to school transformation by promoting the development of wholesome and present human models who can create contexts and conditions for both teachers and students to cultivate modes of personal development leading to their own well-being and that of others.

### **The monitoring objectives are:**

Analyzing the management of the intervention to assess whether it meets the goals of the Program and make recommendations to implement improvements.

### **The evaluation purposes are:**

To identify levels of impact of the Program in improving the well-being of the participants, as well as its effect on the school context.

**Impact Evaluation:** the evaluation model of the Presence Program previously described was implemented in order to guarantee the viability of an impact evaluation in the medium term after intervention to measure the effects of the program on the beneficiary population and verify whether they are attributable to the intervention. The evaluation will answer the question of what would have happened to the beneficiaries if they had not taken the training.

In terms of the evaluation of cognitive, emotional and attitudinal aspects, the contributions of research and evaluation in neuroscience provide the innovations and aspects to be considered in an

impact evaluation, which in this case is also experimental. In this sense, the program has an alliance with the Institute of Cognitive Neurosciences of Conicet, which has advanced in this type of measurements in the country.

## **Analysis dimensions linked to the evaluation of results**

Based on the program's proposal, the results evaluation and impact evaluation will be structured around the analysis of the following constructs:

- a.** Mindfulness and emotional regulation
- b.** School climate
- c.** Social awareness
- d.** Institutional change in relation to the new skills of the 21st Century and the promotion of innovation and greater well-being in institutions and their contexts

## Annex

### Evaluation Model

#### Evaluation Components and Criteria

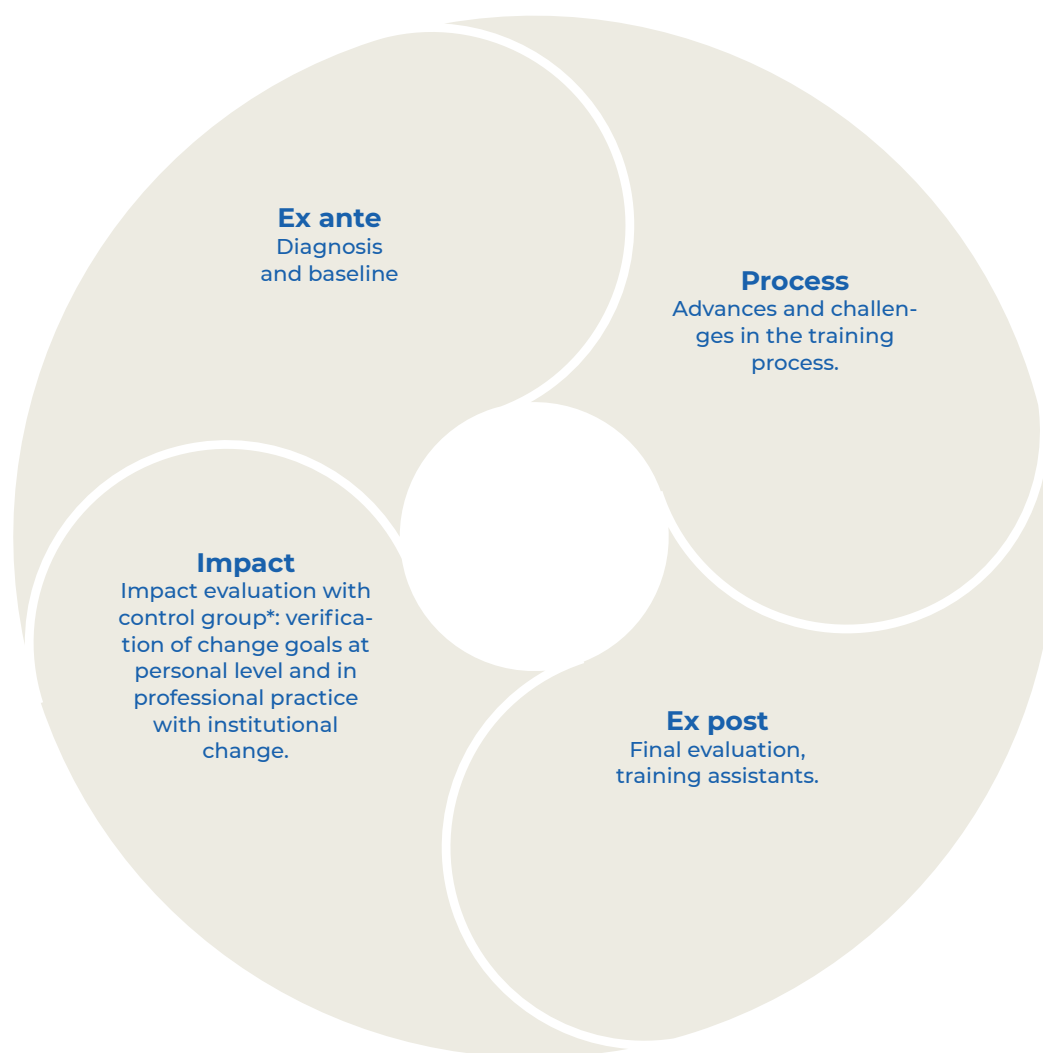
The components and criteria considered in the evaluation model are as follows

Component	Criteria
<b>General Evaluation</b>	<b>Relevance</b> How relevant has the intervention been in the school considering its relationship with the school context, the interest of the participants and the resources and time space necessary for its implementation?
<b>Evaluation of the implementation</b>	<b>Coherence</b> Has the intervention been able to develop its different processes and activities? To what extent has the design of the
<b>Evaluation of results</b>	<b>Effectiveness</b> To what extent have the objectives of the intervention been met? What have been the achievements of the intervention in the participants and at the institutional level?
<b>Institutionalization of the program</b>	<b>Relevance</b> To what extent has personal transformation favored changes in social consciousness?



Detail	Descriptors	Instruments
Vision of the implementation of the intervention proposal. It considers technical feasibility, practical feasibility, and development conditions.	Theoretical and methodological foundation. User needs and expectations Resources and feasibility of the proposal	Closing interview, questionnaires about workshop and modules, closing questionnaire.
Give an account of the mechanisms and processes in the implementation. Coherence refers to the degree of consistency of the intervention proposal and its application in the real context.	Operability of the proposal Reception of the proposal by the participants and the school Participation achieved in the different instances.	Attendance record, Facilitator record, workshop questionnaire and modules, closing interviews and closing questionnaires.
Assessment of the results obtained with the implementation of the intervention proposal. The effectiveness criterion refers to the distance between the objectives initially planned in the design and the achievements obtained, the relationship between what was assigned and what was achieved	Achievements Scope of the proposal in two central dimensions: -Mindfulness -School climate	Scales, closing interviews, closing questionnaire (in relation to the starting questionnaire),
Exploration of the relevance that the program has had on the participants, the review of practices in the classroom and/or the institution, the formation of practice communities.	Presence of changes in practices, behaviors and actions at the classroom and institutional levels. Construction and development of a community project	Closing interviews, focus groups with participants. Climate scale

## Presence Program Evaluation Model



\*\* To be conducted by the Conicet team of the Institute of Cognitive Neurosciences with national and international experience in evaluating these dimensions.



# Presence and Art

## Andy Goldsworthy

The artist and environmentalist Andy Goldsworthy was born in England in 1956. He is one of the most influential artists in Land Art, a trend in which the landscape and the work of art are closely linked. Goldsworthy produces ephemeral sculptures in both natural and urban spaces, using a wide variety of resources. Most of his works are fleeting and disappear shortly after being created.





Andy Goldsworthy does not try to reveal an idyllic nature through his work, but rather seeks to generate an understanding and record of its physical and real characteristics. In the first image we see a huge wooden snake that invites us to enter the forest, where the abundance of nature contains and nourishes us. The forest invites us to explore it with the gaze of a child, without expectations, discovering and astonishing us with every step we take.



**“I take the opportunity that every day offers me.”**

**Andy Goldsworthy**



The forest proposes us to stop; contemplate its immensity, embrace its trees, listen to its sounds, appreciate its scents, marvel at the nuances of colors, savor throughout our journey the mystery that is presented to us at every moment. Nature awakens us a whole spectrum of thoughts and emotions, where we perceive a great variety of sensations. In this forest there will be trials and challenges. Each moment will give us a new opportunity for growth and transformation.

**"Walking, I hear a deeper voice. Suddenly, all my ancestors are behind me. 'Be still', they tell me. 'Look and listen. You are the result of the love of thousands'."**

**Linda Hogan, escritora nativa americana**

Finally, on the way out, we leave with the assurance that we are not alone and that the forest is always within us.



**To learn more about the life and work of Andy Goldsworthy:**

We recommend the documentaries *"Rivers and Tides"* (2001) y *"Leaning into the Wind"* (2017).



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