

## THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE INTERVENTION PLAN IN AN INDUCTION WORKSHOP FOR OBSERVANT DANCE TEACHERS TO INCREASING THE LEVELS OF PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT AND SATISFACTION

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The article examines the contribution of a model for an intervention plan of female observant dance teachers in their first year of teaching, to their coping with difficulties teaching and to an increase in their commitment to teaching and satisfaction therewith. The findings show that there was a significant decrease in the general index of the difficulties, the perception of satisfaction with teaching increased significantly between the beginning of the workshop and its conclusion, and a tendency of increasing was found in the perception of commitment to teaching.

**Keywords:** *satisfaction, commitment, intervention plan model, induction workshop, dance teachers.*

### PROGRAM DE INTERVENȚIE A PROFESORILOR DE COREGRAFIE PRIVIND SATISFAȚIA ȘI ANGAJAMENTUL PROFESIONAL

În articol este analizată activitatea educațională a profesorilor de coregrafie și se propune un program pedagogic de formare privind angajamentul și satisfacția profesională. Se analizează dificultatea de predare și se propun diferite mijloace de îmbunătățire a situației. Rezultatele intervențiilor pedagogice semnifică scăderea semnificativă a dificultăților și creșterea profesionalismului și a satisfacției cadrelor didactice de activitatea educativă.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** *satisfacție, angajament, plan de intervenție de model, atelier de inducție, profesori de dans.*

### Introduction

The article examines the contribution of a model for an intervention plan that was constructed for an induction workshop of female observant dance teachers in their first year of teaching, to their coping with difficulties teaching and to an increase in their commitment to teaching and satisfaction therewith. Studies have shown that a person's sense of commitment to their profession and their workplace, as well as their satisfaction with their occupation, are two important aspects towards ensuring their persistence on the job [2,16,21,4,13].

The rationale for constructing the unique model is based on findings from studies indicating that designated workshops (with a disciplinary focus) meet the specific and immediate needs of the intern during their first year as teachers in the education system, thus helping them with the process of socialization into their position and contributing to an increase in satisfaction with their job and to their professional development [1,5]. The contents of the program were constructed in light of the findings of a pioneer study that examined the perceptions and positions of observant dance teachers as to commitment to teaching and satisfaction therewith. The findings indicated that the predictors of commitment and satisfaction of these teachers are the professional field and the interaction with the students [14]. In order to reinforce these aspects among participants, the intervention plan focused on two main strategies – personal-professional support for dealing with difficulties, and collaborative reflection - an approach designed to develop sensitivity and awareness to the 'self' (the teacher), the 'other' (the student), and the professional field in all its aspects [25]. The workshop was instructed by an expert lecturer in the field of pedagogy and in the discipline – dance.

### Theoretical Background

During the first year of teaching, the new teacher deals with a variety of professional and personal difficulties deriving from their work in the class and at the school. Studies show that the first year is especially difficult, since during it the teacher is required to perform their job similarly to the experienced, senior teacher. Common professional difficulties are coping with disciplinary issues, organizing learning materials and meeting the unique needs of students. Among the main personal difficulties are the sense of loneliness the teacher experiences in the system, and the shock from the reality they are exposed to [23,2,25,15]. Studies have found that the difficulties that teachers experience early in their careers trigger anxiety, a sense of incompetence and stress that impede on their satisfaction and their commitment to teaching, and as a result many teachers drop out of teaching during their first years of working [25,11,17,6,3,21].

An attempt to cope with the difficulties of the beginner teacher around the world has led to the development and design of various programs of assistance and support during the stage of entering the profession [22, 8]. In Israel, support for teachers during their first year is achieved, among other things, by an induction workshop (internship), provided by the Ministry of Education. The workshop is defined as a group for personal growth and learning for the teacher, intended to provide them with tools for handling various issues in education and 'real-time' hardship situations [12].

Studies indicate that using the collaborative reflection approach in the workshop provides an opportunity to benefit from the advantages of a supportive and empowering group, which allows, on the one hand, for a complex and multi-dimensional discussion of the experiences and their significances; and on the other hand, it allows for the reduction of anxieties from exposure and of psychological inhibitions. In being a collaborative process, it enables the teachers to assimilate lessons from the experience of others and express them in their future professional behavior [25,24,10,18].

In conclusion, the model of the intervention plan constructed for the induction workshop was intended to allow the teachers a renewed, in-depth look at the educational act, to provide interpersonal assistance in analyzing the dilemmas and difficulties in 'real-time', and to present various possible solutions for coping with them, in a desire to reduce feelings of stress and anxiety, which impede on the perception of satisfaction with teaching and commitment to it [9,15,18,21].

#### **Objective of the Study and its Questions**

The objective of the study was to examine the contribution of the intervention plan to a decrease in the perception of difficulties, and to a reinforcement of the commitment and satisfaction of observant dance teachers during their first year of teaching.

#### **Research questions**

1. What is the change in the perception of the difficulties, of the support from various agents, and of the levels of commitment to teaching and satisfaction therewith, among participants, between the beginning of the workshop and its conclusion?
2. What is the contribution of the workshop to the coping of the participants with the work of teaching?

#### **Research method**

The research is a quantitative study.

#### **Research population**

The participants of the induction workshop are 12 dance teachers in their first year of teaching in the Israeli education system, who had trained as teachers in the dance department at a religious academic college of education. The teachers participated in the workshop during the school year of 2014-2015.

#### **Personal background variables**

Average age is 23.8, standard deviation .9, age range 22-25 years, 100% of respondents were born in Israel; 58.3% are married; 25% defined themselves as very religious, 58.3% as religious, 8.3% as lightly-religious, and 8.3% as non-religious. 66.7% work only in RGE schools, 25% work only in GE schools, 8.3% work in both. Of the 11 respondents, 58.4% teach under a regular standard of the school; 41.6% teach through enrichment programs for schools; 50% teach dance as a mandatory subject.

#### **The research tool**

##### **A. The questionnaire**

For the purpose of the study an existing questionnaire [17] was used, which deals with the difficulties of the beginner teacher and the sense of discontent in teaching. The questionnaire was adapted to the research population and the participants were asked to rank the statements on a 6-point Likert scale, from 1 – "Did not influence at all", to 6 – "Influenced very much". The questionnaire also included several open questions to be analyzed through the content analysis method.

In content analyses of the statements, between experts and through computations of Cronbach's alpha reliability, five aspects were produced: difficulties in teaching, discontent in teaching, agents of support with the difficulties, commitment to teaching and satisfaction.

##### **1. Difficulties in teaching** – on this aspect three categories were received:

*Difficulties in integrating the subject of dance into the RGE* – the category refers to difficulties in constructing the curriculum and dealing with the attitude towards the subject among various agents. The category includes 6 statements, for instance: "creating motivation to study (dance)". Cronbach's alpha reliability .66.

*Professional difficulties in teaching* – the category refers to difficulties in the pedagogic field and in interactions with the students. The category includes 10 statements, for instance: "work load". Cronbach's alpha reliability .70.

*Difficulties in adjusting to the school system* – the category describes personal, interpersonal and systemic difficulties. The category includes 14 statements, for instance: "conflict between different roles". Cronbach's alpha reliability .82.

Three indices were constructed based on the categories. A high value on the index points to a high level of perception of the measured content. In order to test for the differentiated validity of the three different difficulties, Pearson's correlations between them were computed, and correlations were found on a medium level, a finding that indicates a differentiated validity.

In addition, an index was constructed for the *perception of the difficulties*, based on all statements. Cronbach's alpha reliability .89.

**2. A sense of discontent in teaching** – this aspect describes various feelings regarding teaching. On this aspect there were three statements, such as: "failing to meet personal expectations regarding the 'self'". Cronbach's alpha reliability .82.

**3. Support agents for dealing with the difficulties** – on this aspect three categories were found:

*Support from agents in the workshop* – this category refers to the instructor and the fellow teachers in the workshop as support for the difficulties. The category includes 2 statements, for instance: "collaboration with colleagues in the internship workshop". Cronbach's alpha reliability .606.

*Support from agents at the school* – this category refers to the tutor and the staff of the school as support for the difficulties. The category includes 4 statements, for instance: "People from the school staff". Cronbach's alpha reliability .668.

*Support from agents at the college* – this category refers to agents at the college as support for the difficulties. The category includes 1 statement: "Agents at the college other than the workshop instructor".

Three indices were constructed based on the categories. A high value on the index points to a high level of perception of the measured content. In order to test for the differentiated validity, Pearson's correlations between them were computed, and correlations were found on a medium level between the support of the workshop and that of the college, which indicates a connection between these two agents of support. No significant connections were found between the support of the school and the support of the workshop or the support of agents at the college.

**4. Commitment to teaching** – the category refers to the degree to which the teacher intends to continue with her work. The category includes 2 statements, for instance: "See yourself as a dance teacher in the education system next year". Cronbach's alpha reliability .91.

**5. Satisfaction with teaching** - the category refers to the teacher's overall feeling about her work. The category includes 2 statements, for instance: "Satisfied with your job". Cronbach's alpha reliability .77.

The statements 'difficulty in class organization' was not included in any of the categories, since it lowered reliability.

**Contribution of the workshop to coping** – the questionnaire distributed at the conclusion of the workshop includes statements that examine the contribution of the workshop to coping. In content analyses of the statements, between experts and through computations of Cronbach's alpha reliability, five aspects were produced where the contribution is expressed:

*Aspect of integrating the subject of dance into the RGE* – the category refers to coping with the occupation with dance in the spirit of the Halacha. The category includes one statement: "Contribution to dealing with religious issues in dance instruction".

*Aspect of adjusting to the school system* – the category refers to developing teaching skills and it includes six statements, for instance: "Contribution to finding ways for dealing with difficulties teaching". Cronbach's alpha reliability .87.

*Aspect of adjusting to the school system* – the category refers to acclimatizing to the new work environment and it includes five statements, for instance: "Contribution to dealing with difficulties in discipline and class management". Cronbach's alpha reliability .93.

*Aspect of commitment to teaching* – the category includes one statement: "Contribution to reinforcing commitment to teaching in the education system".

*Aspect of satisfaction with work* – the category includes one statement: "Contribution to reinforcing satisfaction with work".

Indices were constructed based on the categories. A high value on the index points to a high level of perception of the measured content. In order to test for the differentiated validity of the five different aspects, Pearson's correlations between them were computed, and significant correlations were found ranging from .60 to .70 between the five aspects. This means that there is a connection between the contributions of the workshop to the five aspects, but that the contribution of each is unique.

In addition, an index was constructed for the *perception of the contribution*, based on all statements. Cronbach's alpha reliability .94.

**In the open questions** of the opening and closing questionnaires the teachers were asked to describe their feelings, expectations that were realized and those that were not at the beginning of the year and at its end, and also the contribution of the workshop to their coping. These questions will be analyzed in content analyses as accepted.

### Procedure and Ethics

Participants in the workshop were asked to respond to the questionnaire in the classroom at two times: about a month after the workshop opened, and towards the end of the school year. It was made clear to the participants that the questionnaires were anonymous and will be used for research purposes only, and that they are in no way obligated to fill them out (this commitment is also noted in the preface to the questionnaire).

### Findings

#### The first research question

The first research question examined the change in the perception of the difficulties, the support of the different agents, the level of commitment to teaching and satisfaction thereof among the participants, between the two measurements, 'before and after'.

**Perception of the difficulties** - in order to test for the difference in the perception of the difficulties between two measurements, 'before and after', t-tests were conducted and a significant decrease in the perception of the difficulties in the general index was found. On the specific aspects of the difficulties the decrease is significant for the category "*Difficulties in integrating the subject of dance into the RGE*", and does not achieve significance for "*Difficulties adjusting to the school system*" and "*Professional difficulties*". Averages are shown in the following figure.

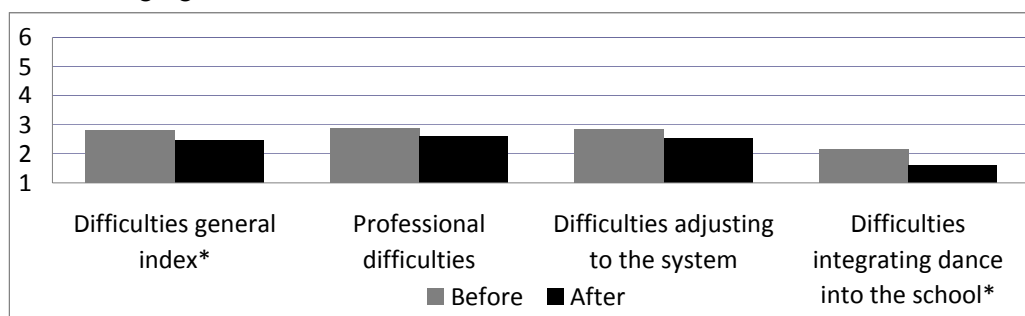


Fig.1. Differences in the perception of difficulties between the beginning of the workshop and its conclusion.

\* Significant difference

Teachers referred to the changes that occurred in the open question as well, for instance –

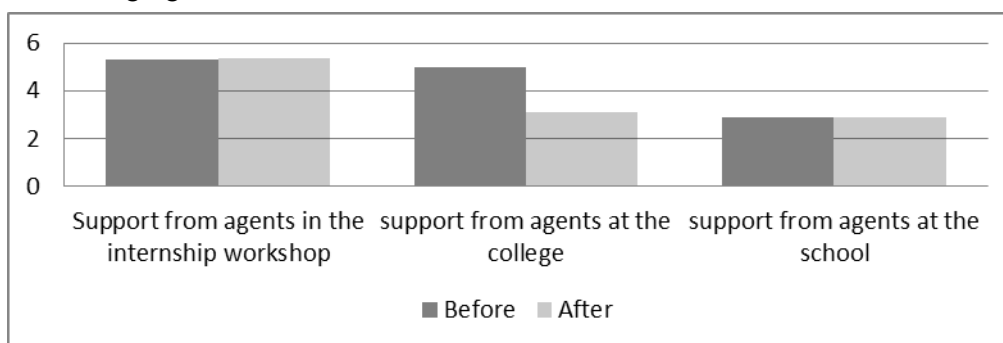
**Difficulties integrating dance in the RGE:** "I succeeded in creating a change and harnessing the girls to an enthusiasm during class, to enlisting towards a show while taking responsibility, seriously, rehearsals on their own time (without me), and love for the dance lessons."

**Professional difficulties:** "I feel that I have gone through a process with the students, and now I know them better and know how to work with them, they also feel more open with me and relations with them improve and opens them to the world of dance. I can 'hold' a class and deal with problems. I have more confidence."

**Difficulties adjusting to the system:** "A change has occurred in the connection to the staff members, and thank God there is a great connection, and I feel that I belong and am appreciated. The sense of belonging is

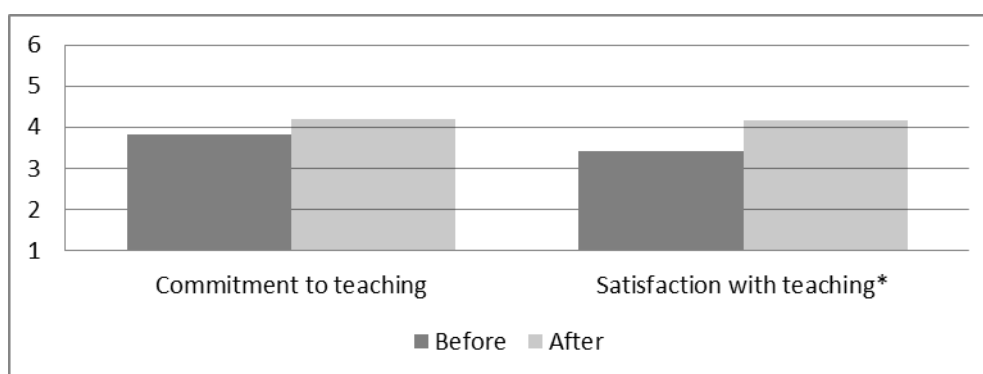
critical for me in order to work and make an effort. I feel attached to the place, loved. I speak with almost all of the teachers, and am present and take part in the school staff."

**Perception of support** – in order to test for the difference in the perception of support between two measurements, 'before and after', t-tests were conducted as to each of the support agents. No significant differences were found in the perception of support before the workshop and following it. It is important to note that the perception of support of the workshop was already very high in the first measurement. In the perception of support of the college a decrease was noted, but it did not achieve significance. Averages are shown in the following figure.



**Fig.2.** Differences in the perception of support from the various agents between the beginning of the workshop and its conclusion.

**Level of commitment to teaching and satisfaction therewith** – in order to test for the differences in the participants' perception of the level of commitment to teaching and satisfaction therewith between two measurements, 'before and after', t-tests were conducted. It was found that the perception of satisfaction rose significantly from the beginning of the workshop to its conclusion. In the perception of commitment to teaching there is a perceived rise, but it is not significant. Averages are shown in the following figure.



**Fig.3.** Differences in the perception of commitment to teaching and satisfaction therewith between the beginning of the workshop and its conclusion.

\* Significant difference

### The second research question

The question examined the perception of the contribution of the various aspects of the workshop to the participants' coping with the work of teaching.

In order to examine the perception of the contribution of the workshop to the participants of the study, descriptive statistical analyses were conducted. In general, the contribution of the workshop was evaluated as high.

In order to test the differences in the perception of the aspects of the contribution of the workshop, a variance analysis was conducted with repetitive measurements, and a significant effect was found ( $F(4, 44) = 5.30; p < .001$ ). In order to test for the source of the differences a Bonferroni analysis was conducted ( $p < .05$ ), and the hierarchy found was that the *professional aspect* was the highest, the *aspect of integration of dance in the RGE* was the lowest, and among all other aspects there were no differences.



Averages appear in the following figure:

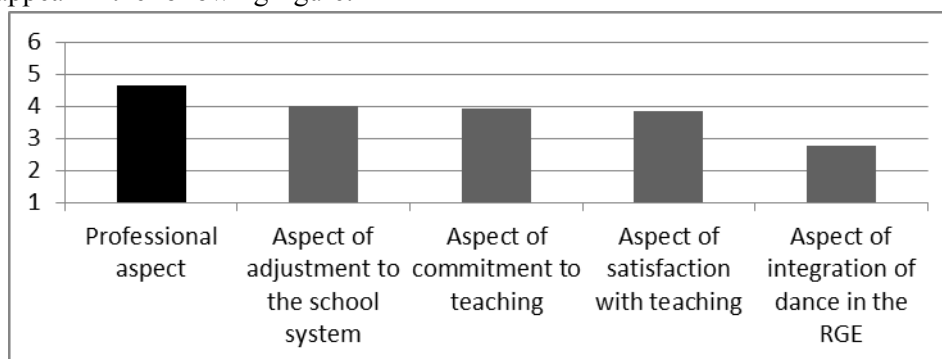


Fig.4. Perception of the contribution of the workshop in the various aspects.

Teachers referred to the contribution of the workshop in the open question as well, for instance –

**To the perception of the contribution to the aspect of integration of dance in the RGE:** "Coping with difficulties at school through a collaborative discussion in the workshop helped me a lot. I had a case of an ultraorthodox student who didn't dare deal with her body. The workshop gave me ideas of how to approach the issue."

**To the perception of the contribution to the professional aspect:** "The workshop helped me look at cases of children with difficulties, understand them better and adopt a professional education-therapeutic instruction approach that will assist the child experiencing the difficulty and me as her teacher."

"The professional instruction in tips and the examples the workshop instructor provides from her life and experience help me understand that we are all human beings and we all experience difficulties, and even she – who is undoubtedly a very successful teacher! – experienced feelings of disappointment and of success. It strengthened me a lot."

**To the perception of the contribution to the aspect of adjustment to the school system:** "At the beginning of the year the workshop helped me get ideas as to how to set boundaries in class and not give up on creating a clear framework for the students."

"The workshop gave me a sense of confidence that I was OK, and that everyone deals with the same difficulties, a sort of support group to hear the difficulties and think together of possible solutions."

#### Conclusion and Discussion of Findings

The study examined the contribution of the model of the intervention plan constructed for the induction workshop to coping with difficulties and to an increase in commitment to teaching and satisfaction therewith of female observant dance teachers in their first year of teaching, instructed by an expert lecturer in the field of pedagogy and in the discipline of dance. The intervention plan was operated as part of the induction workshop for beginner teachers, in light of the importance of the support of a teacher with their difficulties during their first year of teaching.

**The first research question** examined the change between the measurement "before" the workshop and the measurement "after" it, on the following aspects: the perception of the difficulties, the support from various agents, the level of commitment to teaching and satisfaction therewith.

**Perception of the difficulties** – the findings indicate a significant decrease in the general index of difficulties, which is comprised of three aspects. On two aspects – professional difficulties and difficulties adjusting to the school system – a tendency was found of a decrease in the perception of difficulties, and on the third aspect – difficulties integrating dance at the school – a significant decrease was found. The findings show that although the group consisted of only 12 participants, a significant decrease was found in the general index, and hence it may be assumed that the model of the intervention plan as part of the workshop supported the teachers and helped mitigate the difficulties where a significant decrease was not found, as well. A similar finding arose in the study of Arbiv-Elyashiv and Lederer (2011), who had found that support workshops with a differential focus meet the differential and immediate needs of teachers in their first year of teaching more than general workshops.

**Perception of the support** – the findings did not show significant changes in the perception of support between the two measurements, 'before' and 'after', as to each of the support agents. Three support agents were measured:

**1. Perception of support from agents in the workshop.** Already in the first measurement, the perception of support from agents in the workshop by the participants was at a very high level (averaged above 5 on a 6-point scale), and reached the ceiling effect, and hence it was difficult to reach an increase in the level, but it is important to note that the perception remained high and unchanged in the 'after' measurement as well. This finding validates the claim that the objective of the workshop, being to provide assistance and support to the participants throughout their first year of teaching, was achieved.

**2. Perception of support from agents at the college.** The perception of support from agents at the college in the 'before' measurement was relatively high. It can be assumed that before the workshop began teachers expected to receive support from various agents who had accompanied them along their academic studies, since the workshop took place at the college. However, the 'after' measurement showed a tendency of decrease. This meant that towards the end of the first year of teaching, reality has shown that the support they expected to receive was probably not realized.

**3. Perception of support from agents at the school.** In the 'before' measurement, the level of expectation of support was low, and it remained unchanged in the 'after' measurement as well. It may be assumed that the beginner teachers did not perceive agents at the school as significant support agents for their adjustment to teaching.

As to the participants' **perception of commitment and satisfaction**, the findings show that the perception of satisfaction increased significantly from the beginning of the workshop to its conclusion. However, on the perception of commitment to teaching, while there is a tendency of increase, it is not significant. These findings point once again to the fact, that the objective of the intervention plan – to increase satisfaction and commitment – was achieved, even though not all of the findings are significant, which is attributed to the small number [12] of participants in the workshop.

**The second research question** examined the perception of the contribution of the workshop on the following aspects: *professional; adjustment to the school system; integration of dance in the RGE; commitment to teaching; satisfaction with work.*

**Professional aspect** – the findings indicate that on the professional aspect, the workshop was perceived as having the highest level of contribution. This finding concurs with findings in other studies about workshops intended for interns in a certain discipline [1]. The explanation for this, claim researchers Arbiv-Elyashiv and Lederer (2011), is that "focusing on the discipline as part of the workshop provides [teachers] with assistance in teaching their subject for the first time as independent teachers, and it greatly contributes to reinforcing their self-confidence as expert teachers" [1, p.67].

**Aspect of adjustment to the school system** – the findings indicate that on the aspect of adjustment to the school system, the workshop was perceived as having a medium-high level of contribution. Specifically, the results shows that from among the statements constructing this aspect, a high percentage of participants ranked the statements: *contribution to dealing with difficulties in discipline and class management; contribution to dealing with the feeling of a difference between expectations and reality*, as areas where the workshop had especially contributed to them. These finding attest to the importance of the contribution of the workshop in two dimensions – behavioral and mental [15,17,7,23]. It may be assumed that this positive feeling regarding the support of the workshop in dealing with the difficulties could reinforce their motivation to work in the teaching profession, and reduce the chances of attrition.

**Aspect of integrating dance in the RGE** – the findings indicate that on the aspect of integrating dance in the RGE, the workshop was perceived as having the lowest level of contribution. This finding requires further study and research as to the factors causing it, in order to be able to produce the full benefits of the designated workshop as a source of mutual support for teachers, who run into the same problems in different schools [1].

**Aspects of commitment to teaching and satisfaction therewith** – the findings indicate that on the aspects: commitment to teaching and satisfaction therewith, the workshop is perceived as having a medium-high level of contribution. Studies indicate that the contribution of induction workshops to reinforce motivation to continue working in teaching and to reinforce satisfaction with the work of teaching, assists in the process of socialization into the profession, and in reducing the chances of attrition [6,17,20].

### Conclusion

The objective of the model of the intervention plan was to support dance teachers during their first year of teaching, using strategies meant to reduce the perception of difficulties and to reinforce their commitment and satisfaction. The quantitative findings indicate that most objectives of the workshop were achieved, and that most of the changes that occurred between the 'before' and 'after' measurements are statistically significant, this despite the small number [12] of participants. The qualitative findings further reinforce these findings, this can be seen in the insights of the teacher, regarding the contribution of the workshop, in her response to the open question in the 'after' questionnaire: "I felt that through dealing with the problem I learnt many things about myself that helped me empower myself as a teacher and gain much confidence. The group dialogue in the workshop helped me understand how I acted and how I could act, and that I am able to give much to the students – to promote and develop them".

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