

STRESS MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF A STRESS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT:

Existing analysis about teachers' and student's experience of stress, related health risk factors, and consequences for the profession represent the basis of this integrated stress-management concept designed for schools. It has been developed by the author of this article between 1994 and 2004. The ISiS-concept (Integrative Stress-Management in School) follows three methods of stress management, which are used integratively with both teachers and students. First, it offers strategies for stress preventive work with students (e.g. development and evaluation of a training of relaxation with elements of yoga for children). Second, courses for stress-management for teachers were developed and evaluated (e.g. stress-management training with elements of yoga; dance and motion oriented psychological intervention method for stress-management "Biodanza"). Finally, seminars for the broadening of teachers' pedagogic-psychological competences are carried out (e.g. employment of relaxation methods in class; method-training seminars for the reduction of exam anxieties and for a better handling of behavioural disorders and discipline problems). Within the framework of accompanying evaluations we examined 576 subjects with regard to the short and long term effects of the measures taken concerning personnel development and intervention on certain psychological, psycho-social, and immunological parameters. We were able to prove the stress reducing effects of the trainings methods for both students and teachers as well as the improvement of the teachers' pedagogical-psychological competences caused by participating in the training seminars. Until now we were successfully working with 1000 teachers and pupils applying the components of the ISiS-Concept. This article further explains the ISiS-concept and presents the partial results of the accompanying evaluation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The necessity of working on the topic of stress management in schools derives from the ever growing, manifold demands on students and teachers who cope with these problems rather differently. The results of a failure in coping with demands can be of a psychological (exam nerves, aggressive behavioural disturbance in the case of students), somatic or psychosomatic (heart-circulation-disorders in the case of teachers) nature. These consequences can, in turn, manifest themselves in diseases and become chronic. Alarming numbers show this interrelation between stress and its effects (Stück, 1998, 2001, Engel and Hurrelmann, 1989). Only 1.8 percent of all North Rhine-Westphalian¹ teachers are able to work until their age of retirement. All others have to quit

teaching earlier since psychosomatic and psychological diseases occur as a result of this power and energy consuming profession (Sieland, 1999). 40% of those students who were part of two surveys in Saxony² showed an increased level of exam anxieties in the Anxiety Questionnaire (Stück, 1998). About 60% of another group of students, who were examined within two other surveys in Saxony (Roßbach, 1995; Reissig and Petermann, 1996), said that stress related to school is most problematic for them. Causes for these phenomena are the inability to cope with these demands with the help of a regulation that refers to the problem or to the inner self. There is a lack of offers that help effectively to develop a programme for palliation and the development of stress mastering skills which can be applied in schools. Since 1994, we are working at Leipzig University on the development, implementation, and evaluation of the Concept of Integrative Stress Managing in Schools. This article shall give an introduction into the components of this programme, into first results of evaluation and a theoretical introduction to stress.

2. WHAT IS STRESS AND HOW CAN IT BE MASTERED?

There exists a variety of different theories and definitions of stress, depending on the standpoint of the observer. Yet, despite these differences all existing definitions have one understanding in common: **Stress is a necessary psychological and physiological, additional performance in order to cope with alarming problematic situations.**

A stress-triggering alarming situation exists for the individual when a certain demand can no longer be handled with conventional routines of action. The individual sees for himself a danger to the following basic needs on a physical and psychological level (Schröder, 1996):

- need for control of the environment (situations can no longer be controlled by the individual)
- need for self-control (individual can no longer control himself)
- need for self-development (individual can no longer develop himself)
- need for social integration (individual can not count on help).

With the help of this identification of an alarming situation one tries to activate optimal mental, emotional, behavioural, social, and physical aids and recourses to be able to fulfil the demands. This mobilization or additional regulation is also called **acute stress reaction** – a natural survival reaction, which releases additional energies. The following psychological and physiological reactions and stress signals indicate that someone is under this pressure (Schröder and Reschke, 1996) (see Table 1).

¹ Country in the north west of Germany
The Social Work Practitioner-Researcher

² Country where the studies about ISiS Concept took place in the south east of Germany
The Social Work Practitioner-Researcher

Table 1

Stress signals in the stage of acute stress

- a) **in one's thoughts** (stress cognitions and problem thoughts like 'I should not make a mistake', 'I must ...', 'this will go wrong', 'nothing will work out alright'),
- b) **in one's feelings** (inner unrest, anger, insecurities, anxieties),
- c) **in one's behaviour** (I walk faster, I talk louder, I explode easily, I try to do many things at the same time),
- d) **in one's body** (release of the stress hormones adrenaline and noradrenaline: causing an increase of pulse, blood pressure, respiration frequency, increase of the amount of oxygen in the blood and better perfusion of the performing organs like the musculature, preparation of sugar and fat reserves to provide extra energy for the muscles)

Acute stress belongs to our life and some of it is good because it is stimulating; it transfers us into a state that enables us to achieve optimal performances. If demands are mastered with the help of the described acute stress reaction, acute stress has positive effects (development of skills, experiences, and enhancing of one's own status). However, if the stress condition and the obligatory tension last for a longer period of time and if it is not possible to manage this situation, it will result in a permanent mobilisation and, hence, an exhaustion of the energy recourses leading to a harmful restriction of one's physical and psychological well-being. The flexibility and adaptability of the individual to the situation are restricted. This state is also called chronic stress (see Table 2).

Table 2

Stress signals in the incipient stage of chronic stress

Psychological symptoms:

Lacking control of the demand, feelings of anxiety, harassment, depression, helplessness, lower self-esteem, loss of perspective, exhaustion of reserves, loss of the ability to recreate, disturbance of social relations, increase of unhealthy behaviour, destruction of action (impracticability of action plans), reduced effectiveness of action (low quantity and quality of a performance).

Physical symptoms:

Disturbances of the cardiovascular and digestive systems, headaches, insomnia, disturbances of the motor coordination and mimic.

The symptoms of disturbances listed in Table 2 are not yet comparable to a disease. In order to reduce chronic stress conditions the effected person needs, however, management help from his or her personal environment. Should there be no such help, psychologically and/or organically manifested diseases can develop (stomach ulcers, allergies, heart attack, depression, phobias, psychotic developments) (see Table 3).

Table 3

Psychological risk factors for stress diseases

Whether a person diseases because of chronic stress conditions or not does not only depend on the physical peculiarities of this person's constitution, but especially on the following personality-psychological coping peculiarities:

- a) **subjective interpretation of the stress situation (cognitive risk factors):** Less favourable for long term pressure (although justifiable for short term pressure) are mental defence or ignorance of stress. Favourable is an assessment of the situation as being a challenge.
- b) **emotional experience of the situation (emotional risk factors):** Unfavourable is a hostile defence against the demands with strong negative feelings³: depressiveness, anxiety/fear, anger, repeated changes between hope and resignation, feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.
- c) **behaviour in situations of pressure (behavioural risk factors):** Hyperactivity in stressful situations as well as lacking or delayed phases of relaxation can cause illness.

Possible stress management strategies

Teachers as well as students are looking for offers and concepts which can help them deal adequately with pressure. Possible influences for the management of stress situations for children can basically start at two points⁴:

1. Alteration of the conditions of the demands (e.g. school, home)
2. Qualification of students and teachers to become capable of:

a) Regulating the environment

Students and teachers can be taught how to master demands or problematic situations concerning their achievements and the social and organisational sphere by applying appropriate problem solving methods (e.g. by acquiring knowledge, teaching of learning techniques and problem solving strategies, improvement of time management, communication training).

b) Self-regulation

Students and teachers can learn to regain their lost inner balance with the help of different self-regulation methods (relaxation programmes) for a short or longer period of time (see Table 4). The thus gained stability is the requirement for acting successfully in stress situations.

³ Schröder (1997) also calls these negative feelings 'patogenetic transformational links between illness and health'.

⁴ This approach to stress management is based on the stress coping concept by Lazarus (cited in Schwarzer, 1993) and is valid for children as well as for adults in the clinical- and pedagogic-psychological context.

Table 4

Intervention possibilities to encourage the self-regulation of children and adults

Passive methods, not exercise-oriented:	
1.	relaxation through self-hypnosis
2.	travels of the imagination
3.	meditative exercises
4.	self-instruction to stop momentary stress situations
5.	lowering of the level of demands
6.	short sleep ⁵
Active methods, exercise-oriented:	
7.	progressive muscle relaxation (PMR)
8.	yoga
9.	simple stretching exercises
10.	breathing exercises
11.	massages
12.	sensory exercises (euthyme sensory experience)
13.	dance elements
14.	mandala drawing

With the help of these self-regulation methods a balance of emotions is achieved as well as an improvement of the general state of mind, a reduction of tenseness and further effects of the relaxation reaction, which acts as an antagonist towards the stress reaction (see Table 6). Another proven effect (Ebert, 1986) is an optimisation of the vegetative working point with far-reaching psychological consequences: less impulsivity, aggression, and anxiety, better ability to concentrate (Stück, 2001).

3. INTRODUCTION TO THE COMPONENTS OF THE ISIS-CONCEPT

Since 1994, we are developing a stress preventive concept based on the above described theoretical background which is applied to students as well as to teachers. This integrative method is necessary because students and teachers are two components that influence and teach one another. In order to secure this integrative method we suggest three possibilities of intervention:

a) Implementation of preventive interventions for stress management for pupils/students

Focus: preventive work with students

- Training of Relaxation with Elements of Yoga for Children (TorweY-C) as an extracurricular course (Stück 1998, 2000, 2001)
- Project Days for Self-Encounter with Relaxation Methods for Students (PSERMS-Projekt)⁶

⁵ For 5 minutes the head should rest on the table; music will help to relax. This leads to a psychological recreation.

⁶ Every school in Germany gets one day per term off in order to organize activities in different fields (arts, psychology, and many more) together with the students.

b) Implementation of interventions for stress managements for teachers

Focus: preventive work with teachers

- Stress Training with Elements of Yoga for Teachers (StrainY-T): 'It's easy to come up, how will I come down again?' Expedition to the stress mountain.
- Intervention oriented on music, emotions, dance, and social contacts to improve emotional, self-regulative, social competences and to express identity (BIODANZA; Villegas, A.; Stück, M.; Terren, R.; Toro, V.; Balzer, H.-U.; Hecht, K.; Mazzarella, L. 1999, 2000; Stück et al. 2004)

c) Qualification of teachers to use stress and conflict management techniques during lessons (Focus: teacher as mediator; teacher-student-relation)

- methods training seminar: Relaxation Procedures in Schools (RPS-Seminar)
- methods training seminar: Handling behaviourally difficult of students – 'Rioting in the Class-room' (RiC-Seminar)
- methods training seminar: How to motivate students (Motiv-Seminar)
- methods training seminar: Reduction of Exam Anxieties with Students (REAS-Seminar)

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE ISIS COMPONENTS

4.1 Implementation of preventive interventions for stress management for students

4.1.1 Training of Relaxation with Elements of Yoga for Children (TorweY-C) as an extracurricular course

During several years of development, praxis transfer, and evaluation (1994-2001) the Indian method of yoga was integrated into a structured training programme and combined with further tried and tested methods of stress management suitable for children. This programme was tested with students of different types of school. The training consists of 15 sessions (two exercises per week), one session lasting 60 minutes and being structured as follows:

- *First Relaxation* (10 minutes):
It is the aim of this first part to switch from the outer orientation of every day life to the inner orientation, which is necessary as a preparation for the following yoga part. At the end of this first relaxation breathing techniques for self-regulation are taught and exercised (rhythmical breathing, exhaling techniques, among others).
- *Yoga Pari* (30 minutes):
The yoga part is the core of the training where different asana and yoga rows are taught and exercised. It is the aim of these exercises (besides the

immediate effects of yoga) to enable the students to practise asana for self-relaxation independently at home.

- **Final Part (10 minutes):**
In the final part interactive, sensory, and meditation exercises, and travels of the imagination are carried out in combination with self-instruction and massages.

The instruction of this training follows a structured programme which is described in a handbook (Stück, 2000).

Evaluation Results:

The effects of this programme called Training of Relaxation with Elements of Yoga were proven within a test-control-group-design (n=48 subjects) with psychological and physiological measuring methods (Stück, 1998, 2000). The results showed that the students accepted the training and that its contents were attractive to them. We were able to prove with psychological and psychophysiological methods the relaxation effects of the training as well as the stabilization of those parts of one's personality relevant for coping with stress situations. This stabilization is a requirement for reacting successfully (significant positive effects $p \leq 5\%$, e.g. emotional stability, well-being, ability to take stress, ability to concentrate). Furthermore, students also applied the acquired exercises independently for self-regulation (Transfer effects).

Education of Instructors:

Since 1998, 100 instructors are trained to work with TorweY-C in schools but also in the clinical context. Here as well, positive effects with regard to a decrease of exam anxiety and of the momentary experience of stress as well as an improvement of the ability to relax became visible (significant effects, $p \leq 5\%$). Thus, the successful transfer of the training from its developmental phase into praxis was verified (Hartwig, 2000; Jahn, 2001; Stück et al, 2002).

4.1.2 Project Days for Self-encounter with Relaxation Methods for Students (PSERMS-Projekt)

To promote self-experience with relaxation methods we introduce students to a short relaxation programme with different elements of the TorweY-C (short sleep, travels of the imagination, candle meditation, drawing mandalas, yoga exercises) during project days. Within this praxis seminar, lasting 90 minutes, students are taught in small groups of up to 10 participants not only practical exercises but theoretic knowledge about the phenomenon *stress* as well. Parallel to this student-oriented self-experience we also work with teachers to inspire them to practice relaxation methods with their students or to take part in a more complex course (see also RMS-Seminar, 5.a).

Evaluation Results

The results of an accompanying evaluation with 44 students (5th grade; 12 years) of a Leipzig school showed that all practiced elements of relaxation were accepted by the students. The analysis of the pre-post-rating concerning the subjective experience of relaxation indicated a significant improvement ($p=0.6\%$, u-test for dependent sample surveys) of the experience of relaxation after the training. Objectively, this effects of the relaxation are also demonstrated by the pulse, which was taken before and after the relaxation exercises, and which also showed significant changes ($p=0.9\%$).

Table 5

Mean & Significances – Total

	Mean	Significance
Systolic blood pressure (before)	111.26	0.119
Systolic blood pressure (after)	106	
Pulse (before)	78	0.009
Pulse (after)	71.72	

4.2 Intervention programmes for stress management applied to teachers

4.2.1 Stress Training with Elements of Yoga for Teachers (StrainY-T): 'It's easy to come up, how will I come down again?' Expedition to the stress mountain.

Between 1999 and 2002, the Stress Training with Elements of Yoga for Teachers (StrainY-T) was developed and evaluated. It can be carried out in two different ways with an ensuing refreshing-seminar:

- 10-weeks-course: one meeting (two hours) per week (StrainY-T-Course)
- 3-days- compact-course: (StrainY-T-Compact)
- Refreshing Seminar

Theoretic and thematic frame concept:

The training and the compact course are thematically planned and carried out as an expedition to a mountain with the title: '*It's easy to come up, how will I come down again?*' Expedition to the stress mountain. It has been proven that this travel to the stress mountain is worthwhile since it offers a new, highly imaginative approach to the application of training programmes for stress management. A climbing expedition can easily be compared to the life of a teacher because in both cases the breakdown of energy recourses due to an inappropriate stress management can lead to a far-reaching state of exhaustion along with a weakening of the immune system, vegetative and/or psychological instability, and psychosomatic reactions (Stück, Hecht, Schröder, Rieck, 2001). The numerous early retirements of teachers are an indicator for this development (Sieland, 2000). The concept of this training aims at enabling the participating teachers to acquire the following abilities:

- Internal stability during or after the stress situation along with a growing psychological stability being a prerequisite for successful external reactions. The teacher is to acquire techniques that will help him to regulate emotions in order to reach a psycho-vegetative balance e.g. after stress conditions (breathing and walking meditation, relaxation through self-hypnosis, self-reflections, self-instructions, among others).

- Furthermore, teachers will learn how to better cope with external demands in their everyday lives with the help of stress-relevant strategies (e.g. with regard to teacher-student-interaction, time management, communication behaviour).

a) Contents of the 10-weeks-course (StrainY-T-Course):

Each session of the 10-weeks-course offer lasts two hours. Based on earlier personal experiences in the development of training programmes (Stück, 1998, 2000) the structure of the sessions is organized in such a way that in the first part psycho-educative contents related to stress-relevant problems are taught and different short- and long-term stress management techniques are exercised. For this approach, the effective components of intervention programmes, developed by Schröder and Reschke (1996) and Wagner-Link (1999), as well as newly developed training modules are used. In the second part of the sessions the self-regulation methods yoga and meditation are used to train presence, composure, carefulness, and the ability to relax. This element of the training was successfully tested within the scope of another course offer (Training of Relaxation with Elements of Yoga for Adults, TorweY-A) between May and June 1999 and later modified to fit the needs of this training. Regular exercises of the self-regulation-methods (yoga, meditation, relaxation through self-hypnosis) for 45 minutes each session are an important distinctive feature compared to other programmes.

Table 6

Structure of a session of the teacher training

<p>Psycho-educative part concerning the following topics: Theory of stress, stress diagnosis, short- and long-term stress management techniques, conflict management and communicative behaviour specifically for teachers, social net, naming of personal desires and objectives.</p>
<p>Self-regulative part: Relaxation through self-hypnosis, yoga and meditation.</p>

Scientific research ascribes very efficient psychotherapeutic effects to yoga and meditation methods (Grave, Donati, Bernauer, 1998). This self-regulative aspect was demanded by the teachers in a preliminary examination (see Table 7).

Table 7

Teachers' expectations (n=20) with regard to the content of the training that is to be developed

Teachers' expectations	Number of naming (absolute)
Relaxation methods (meditation, relaxation exercises, yoga, breathing exercises, relaxing sounds)	11
Problem-centred, stress-relevant discussion	6
Small groups (7-10 participants)	5
Exercise of motions; physical group exercises to reduce stress (dancing, rhythmical massages, gymnastic)	4
Learning, not taking home problems (thought stop)	3
Self-management strategies specific to the situation, self-control (learn to control one self, regulation of emotions)	3
No group talks	3

b) Contents of the compact-course (StrainY-T-Compact):

In addition to the 10-weeks-course, a 3-day seminar (StrainY-T-Compact) is offered. In this course the same content is taught in a compromised form with psycho-educative contents functioning as self-regulative exercises (small yoga programme; breathing and walking meditation). In the psycho-educative part the following aspects are covered: theory of stress, stress diagnosis, short- and long-term stress management techniques, social net, naming of personal desires and objectives.

c) Contents of the Refreshing Seminar:

Six months after the end of both courses the following emphases are covered in a Refreshing Seminar:

- Analysis of the achievement-scales, which were made up from the aims of the course participants. Analysis of progresses and problems that occurred when the acquired knowledge was transferred into practice.
- Stabilisation of self-esteem with the help of feedback exercises related to the experienced changes.
- Feedback for the training evaluation results concerning the ability to relax, behavioural and experience patterns related to work, and changes in experience and behaviour.
- Repetition of self-regulative exercises of the yoga part as well as meditation and relaxation through self-hypnosis.
- Introduction to another very effective possibility to relax – the saltwater bath. At the end of the seminar an excursion to a saltwater bath takes place.

Evaluation results:

The effects of this training were determined with the accompanying effect and process evaluation study (n=90) with a TG-CG-design (Pre, Post 1, and Post 2). We were able to ascertain significant positive effects on different psychological behavioural and experience patterns (self-effectiveness, optimism, contentedness, job-related behavioural and experience patterns) as well as physiological parameters (blood pressure, skin resistance) and an immunological parameter (immune globulin A in the saliva).

Education of Instructors:

Since 2003 we educated and evaluated instructors to work with this method in schools (n=20).

4.2.2 Music-Emotion-Dance oriented Intervention to Improve Emotional, Self-regulative, and Social Competences (BIODANZA)

In addition to the traditional and successful stress management possibilities, which aim especially at changes through the cognitive-behavioural level, the ISIS-concept works with a non-verbal and self-regulative emotion-dance- and contact-oriented intervention to improve emotional and social competences. In 1967, the Chilean psychologist Prof. Rolando Toro developed 'Biodanza' – the dance of life – a method which received international acknowledgement and was introduced in Europe in the 1980s. No previous knowledge is necessary in order to be able to practice this method. Under the instruction of experienced teachers life (bios) is danced with integrated movements (danza). Thus, motor-affective mechanisms for the reactivation of instincts and the non-verbal expression of one's own identity are initiated. Most importantly, this method achieves an integral, integrating emotional experience of music, singing, and dancing as well as the individual experience of being part of the group. These experiences and the exercises of the Biodanza sessions are related to the following areas: vitality, affectivity, creativity, sexuality, and transcendence.

Evaluation results

Between 1998 and 2002 we investigated this intervention method within an Experimental and Control group Design (n=150 subjects, teacher, students, patients). This research has shown that this method effectively enhances health, reactivates recourses, and prevents stress situations (Villegas, A.; Stück, M.; Terren, R.; Toro, V.; Balzer, H-U.; Hecht, K.; Mazzarella, L., 1999, 2000, Stück et. al., 2004). Therefore, according to the health policy of the World Health Organisation (WHO), Biodanza gains special notice due to the progressive development of health and a primary prevention. Biodanza demands psycho-physical self-orientation and increases the ability to act and the effectiveness of these actions. A special effect is the modulation and balancing of different emotions (improved regulation of anger, optimism, and reduction of depressions, among others).

5. INSTRUCTION OF TEACHERS TO USE STRESS- AND CONFLICT-MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES IN CLASS

In this third ISIS intervention approach teachers shall be instructed to work as mediators for the application of stress- and conflict-management techniques in schools. Therefore, special emphasis lies on the fact that teachers are to enable their students to use management strategies (teacher-student-relation). The following instruction concepts are being practiced:

a) Method-Training-Seminar: Relaxation Methods in Schools (RMS-Seminar):

This seminar is conceived for teachers who shall be instructed to use relaxation exercises regularly during lessons. A pilot-study with school teachers in Saxony (Germany) show (n=35), that only 17% of the teacher apply these self-regulation methods on a regular basis. This number is higher (46.4%) with consultation teachers⁷ (n=68). One reason for not using relaxation methods, often named by teachers, is the lack of time. We believe that a lack of knowledge about the advantages and effects of relaxation exercises as well as personal fears also account for this fact. The benefits of relaxation exercises – inner balance, improved ability to concentrate, and a better learning environment – are proven by our tests. The teacher profits as well, because he can also relax and work better with his students, since he reaches their physiological level of arousal and is able to attract many students through group intervention. In our opinion, this is a very effective and practicable method. The instruction of the teachers takes place as a one-day seminar where different elements of relaxation are introduced and a theoretic basis is worked out. Furthermore, the teachers are taught how to instruct these exercises (travels of the imagination, meditative exercises, short sleep, progressive muscle relaxation, simple stretching exercises, breathing exercises, massages, sensory exercises, mandala drawing). The listed exercises were compiled from the results of interviews with teachers who already use these methods successfully.

Evaluation Results

Since 1998, 68 teachers of different school types and age groups were interviewed. The questions concerned the favourite and most successful relaxation methods as well as their effects. With the help of a praxis hand-book, which was based on this information, further education for teachers is organized. The results listed below are given as examples.

Table 8

Please, name shortly which methods you are already using. (n=68)

Methods	Number of naming (absolute)	p %
Relaxation music	31	55.4
Travels of the imagination	26	46.4
Motion exercises	21	37.5
Sensory exercises (listening, feeling, smelling, partner exercises)	15	26.8
Quiet moments, exercises (e.g. head on the desk in combination with travels of the imagination or music)	13	23.2
Mandalas	13	23.2
Breathing exercises	12	21.4
Games (singing, dancing)	10	17.9
Muscle relaxation exercises	6	10.7
Songs, singing	6	10.7
Finger exercises	5	8.9
Others	14	25

Table 9

What are the results of those relaxation exercises regarding performance, experience, and behaviour of the students? (n=68)

Effects	Number of naming (absolute)	p %
Increase in quality of lessons	25	48.1
Quiet, balance	24	46.2
Positive effects on behaviour	10	19.2
Increase in pleasure in lessons	9	17.3
Reduction of inhibitions (shy students become more outgoing)	7	13.5
Relaxation	6	11.5
More precise perception	3	5.8
Stimulation of the imagination	3	5.8
Others	14	26.9

b) Method-Training-Seminar: dealing with behaviourally difficult students – ‘Riot in the Classroom’ (RiC-Seminar)

During this two-day seminar teachers learn how to deal with behaviourally difficult students. With the help of exemplary cases the participants develop behaviour analyses with derived alternatives and try their practicability. It is the aim of this seminar to enable teachers to analyse and solve problem situations in self-supervision (within a small group).

c) Methods training seminar: How to motivate students (Motivation-Seminar)

In the first part of this seminar teachers acquire basic motivation techniques (use of reinforcement, partner-oriented working, determination of mutual objectives,

rhetoric). In the second part these techniques are trained with role plays taken from everyday school life.

d) Methods training seminar: Reduction of Exam anxieties with Students (REAS-Seminar)

This two-days seminar explains the theoretic basis of the causes for anxieties and of the diagnosis of exam nerves. With the help of praxis-oriented exercises and group discussions possibilities of coping with exam anxieties are being worked out.

Evaluation Results for Seminars b, s, d:

At the moment, the testing and evaluation phase of this Seminar takes place with 124 teachers. It will be finished by January 2004.

6. CONCLUSION AND PROSPECTS

The evaluations of the ISiS-components show that the afore mentioned interventions are valuable instruments for coping with pressure in everyday school life. All three ISiS-components were evaluated positively and can therefore be put in praxis successfully. Especially the systematic approach to stress management enables both teachers and students to better cope with their pressures. This integrative stress-management concept also improves the student-teacher relationship. Enabling teachers and students to deal with stress prevents them from unburdening themselves to the others. Since teachers did not acquire stress management strategies during their studies, this training helps them to use specific psychological knowledge and techniques in school. Moreover, it gives them a tool to simplify their work and competently solve psychological problems by themselves. The initiated training of instructors (training of relaxation with elements of yoga for children; stress management with elements of yoga for teachers) and the proven acceptance of the intervention approaches secures the transfer of the ISiS-concept and its components into praxis. More information: stueck@rz.uni-leipzig.de

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