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DEVELOPING EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE IN THE PRIMARY
EDUCATION THROUGH THE TEACHING STYLE

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Abstract

The necessity for emotional development in children is becoming more and more important, due to the multitude of adverse conditions which prevail in the pupils' activity - the individual risk factors and the system factors - both affecting to a large extent their educational school development. Thus, specialized methods and techniques are needed to be implemented in order to boost and improve the emotional resilience. In the modern society there is an emphasis on the social-emotional development of the child, on his acquiring a set of skills and knowledge that they need throughout life. Thanks to building and strengthening their emotional resilience, pupils may provide and increase the motivation in learning and they tend to high expectations in education, face the diverse challenges existent in our society, regardless the risk factors and the problems that they could be confronted with while at school. The intervention of the teacher has a significant role in shaping and improving pupils' emotional resilience in the area of the crucial acquisition, both through personalized programmes of intervention and through activities unfolding in the extra-school backgrounds. The preoccupation with the pupil's attitude towards school, towards the teacher in the classroom, towards the numerous emotional problems children confront with nowadays do not have to be interpreted solely individually, as it is an issue of the entire society.

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1. Introduction

The concern on the attitude of the pupil towards school, the class teacher, the multitude of emotional problems the present pupils face should not be interpreted individually or personally, as these problems represent an issue of the whole society. This is the reason why there is a high interest in acquiring and improving/ameliorating the pupils' emotional resilience. At the same time, the boost of children's emotional resilience is the most important guarantee of the success in life, of creating a positive image of herself/himself, capable of enjoying life and willing to start all over again as many times as life asks for.

1.1. Resilience. Conceptual and terminological framework

Firstly, we will direct our attention on the conceptual framework of resilience in general and on the emotional resilience in particular.

The term was first mentioned in 1620 and it had the meaning of "*bouncing back*". The word came from French *résilience* which derived from the Latin verb "*to recoil*", which also means "*to save*" as it can be used with the meaning of protection (Tisseron, 2007). The first research on the term of resilience was made on children threatened by adversity. According to O' Dougherty Wright and Masten, the concept that is studied refers to "background conditions which interfere with the tasks of the process of children's development appropriate to the age or threaten the accomplishment of these tasks" (as cited in Ionescu, 2013, p. 27). As main conditions poverty, physical abuse and lack of a stable residence are mentioned. The research upon resilience zooms in around three big founding contributions:

1. The longitudinal study of Emmy Werner și Ruth Smith. They devoted their attention to the development of 698 children experiencing the effect of three or more risk factors like divorce, poverty, conflicts in their families, alcoholism and others.
2. The research on different populations found in high-risk situations was carried out by Michael Rutter.
3. "Competence" Project at The University of Minnesota was coordinated by Norman Garnezy (Ionescu, 2013).

The word used to refer to the individual's resilience to stress was *resilience*. Masten defined *resilience* as "the capacity of a dynamic system to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten system function, viability, or development" (Masten, 2014, p. 6). In addition to this, the word refers to living and artificial entities.

Resilience as a human ability was introduced by the American psychologist Siebert (2009) and he had an international impact thanks to his research on the distinguishing features of the very resilient survivors. The author characterized *the resilient individual* or *resilience* through more capabilities, namely: to face the rapid changes in the society in order to preserve our health in various stressful situations, to overcome the problems and reinvent ourselves, to continue in a different way, if the old way is not functional anymore. More exactly, "*the capacity to do all these without acting in a destructive or in a dysfunctional way*" (Siebert, 2009, p. 19).

Therefore, the phenomenon of resilience is a natural process that is part of many children and grown-ups' life. It is very important to know how to face the diverse problems and difficulties that occur in one's life.

1.2. The educational style

Due to the special significance in the educational approach, adopting an emotional pedagogical educational style to improve and develop the emotional competences and the pupils' social abilities in the area of the fundamental acquisition, stands for new way of conceiving and implementing the educational curricula and a new attitude between teachers and pupils.

The whole system of the crystallized personality is converted in an operational variant through the educational style. This points out to a multitude of features that are within the teachers' behaviour in rapport with his/her pupils. The style highlights what is specific to each teacher, her/his personal manner of undertaking the instructive-educational activity. The educational style is personal and somehow unique to each individual.

“As a crucial element of the instructive-educational process, the teacher-pupil relationship changes and influences everything. Thus, any deviation from the criterion of relational competence negatively impacts on the pupil's development of his/her personality” (Albulescu & Albulescu, 2000, p. 164).

2. Problem Statement

In the last years, the investigations made on resilience steered from the identification of the protection factors towards the identification of the mechanisms through which these factors influence the positive adaptation, as well as from defining the term as a global, universal, one-dimensional one (which involves a high level of functioning in many areas), towards defining it according to particular, specific domains (educational, occupational, social, family-related).

2.1. The emotional resilience

Before going further on in analyzing the concept of emotional resilience, we have a stop upon emotion. There is a dispute among researchers related to the way emotions are born. Some claim that emotions are automatic phenomena that are released down *biologically*, without the contribution to their appearance of the psychological mechanisms. This point of view relies especially on the observation that emotions (and specifically the joint physiological modifications) appear extremely quickly, many times even before the person has been aware of the existence of the emotion.

Other researchers claim that the emotions are the result of the person's assessment of the situations he/she has been through and, consequently, they consider the emotion more like a psychic phenomenon and not a biological one.

As South Lakes Federation (2014) considers, we understand the emotional resilience as the individual's capability of adapting to stressful situations, to high-pressure situations, conflicts, of facing the stress and the problems that occur well, of understanding and managing the emotional reactions, of recovering from the emotional point of view after having been through some difficult life moments. To summarize, *an emotionally resilient person* shows the following characteristics:

- Firstly, a feeling of *self-confidence* and *trust in others*;
- Secondly, a *belief* in your self-efficacy and *the ability* of managing change and adaptability;
- Thirdly, a repertoire of approaches *in resolving the social problems*.

As considering *the children' emotional resilience*, it is defined as being “that quality in children who, though exposed to significant stress and adversity in their lives, do not succumb to the school failure, substance abuse, mental health and juvenile delinquency problems they are at greater risk of experiencing” (Linquanti, 1992, p. 9). This fact allowed to passing from the individual risks and deficits to individual strengths or a set of qualities called *factors of protection*, which facilitate gaining the emotional resilience (Howard, Dryden, & Johnson, 1999).

Resilience is a psycho-social process and the result of the interaction between the internal and external factors. Resilience is the result of the presence of the protection and high-risk factors.

Like *the factors of protection* towards the risk of a disharmonious structure of personality, Rauh (2004) asserts:

- An “easy” temperament of the child;
- the ordinal position of the first born in family;
- perceiving the mother as affectionate;
- a doubtless attachment;
- high self-esteem;
- “locus of control”;
- the presence of an alternative person replacing parents in family;
- a support model of the same gender.

Resilience is the result of a complex interaction between *the high-risk factors* and *the protection factors*. While *the high-risk factors* are obstacles in the process of the child’s development starting from the conception to the adulthood, *the protection factors* act through the boost of the resilience towards the high-risk factors, decreasing the effects of the ambient hazard or of the stressful situations in the presence of the individual vulnerability.

2.2. The emotional-pedagogical style and the rationale-improvisational one

The teacher must be prepared both through systematic studies in order to apply the communicative code in school and to add value/ apply the affective code of communication, because only their convergence assures the efficiency of the communication circuits in the didactic activity.

The managerial style is “a process through which a person or a group of persons identify, organize, act, influence the human and technical resources of the class of pupils in order to reach the planned objectives” (Iucu, 2000, p. 129).

The teaching style is “personal and somehow unique in case of each educator” (Potolea, 1982, p. 149). Defined in this way, it expresses the aspects which confer authenticity and identity, personalizing it and making it particular.

As Golu (1988) considers, in accordance with *the characteristics of the process of communication* with pupils, there were four teaching styles identified: emotional-improvisational, emotional-pedagogical, rationale-improvisational, rationale- pedagogical.

The attention directs to the emotional-pedagogical style and the rationale-improvisational style. These two styles represent “intermediate” variants between the two opposite styles. The first associates the idea of the background appropriate to learning, with the care of not losing sight of the specific aims of the teacher’s activity. The second continues to rely on the activity of teaching when considering the outcomes of the sciences of education, but it is understandable that the provision and full control on human behaviour are neither desirable nor possible.

They are considered the most efficient styles thanks to the fact that they stir up the pupils’ interest for the subject of study and also provide them with comprehensive knowledge and great skills, through a better balance of the stages of orientation, engagement and control in the processes of teaching-learning.

Part of a social economic and cultural background, the system of education is envisaged as “a social job” which has to fulfil complex and very important functions. “Being conditioned by this background, he/she will try, through the programmes he/she has created, to prepare the pupil for a certain activity, to shape him/her as a citizen and to develop the spiritual side of his/her life” (Albulescu & Albulescu, 1999, p. 28).

3. Research Questions

In this research we try to find answers to the following questions:

1. What are the most common causes of primary school students’ emotional problems?
2. What are the formative ways of intervention, most commonly used in the process of acquiring emotional resilience?
3. What are the formative and informative valences of an educational program designed that promote socio-emotional well-being with concrete applications for the primary school cycle?

4. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is, by investigating the speciality literature, to highlight the particularities of the development of emotional resilience of primary school students’ and the ways in which the school influences or contributes to the development of their emotional resilience, in different areas of human development.

5. Research Methods

The issue of pupils’ emotional resilience is scrutinized in connection with the characteristics of the present social context and with the domain of the social and emotional competences, considered to be important elements in the process of optimal adaptation.

While studying the phenomenon of resilience I looked up many sources in the bibliography in order to observe its evolution. At the same time, the intensive study in this field helped us in outlining the concepts being scrutinized.

In the context of the contemporary epistemology of the emotional resilience we have got two perspectives: firstly, defining the terms from the point of view of terminology, then, a more in-depth analysis on the phenomenology, on the specialized reflections over concepts.

5.1. The psycho-pedagogical experiment

The system of the methods of pedagogical research represents the multitude of methods and procedures used in the scientific research of the educational phenomenon, which also stands for the operational instruments in the process of learning about the process of the educational phenomenon, in order to perceive and understand its essence and its components and also to discover new truths. Bocoș (2003) considers that, unlike observation which implies following the educational phenomena with no intervention coming from the researcher, *the experiment implies the deliberate modification of the conditions of appearance and development of the phenomena.*

The main method of investigation in the framework of the proposed pedagogical research is going to be a psycho-pedagogical experiment in which the independent variable will be implementing an experimental programme of boosting the pupils' emotional resilience, specifically for the pupils in the series of the primary education, which relies on adopting the teacher's emotional-pedagogical and rationale-improvisational style.

5.2. The observation method

Observation is a method of empirical research through which we collected information about pupils' emotional resilience; as well, we looked into various points of view of the authors who had focused on this topic, aiming at establishing psycho-pedagogical connections to adequately and sensibly describe the studied issue.

Drever and Fröhlich defined the observation in these terms: "the perception and the comprehensive record of the phenomena, objects, events and individuals depending on a given situation" (as cited in Chelcea, 2001, p. 35).

Therefore, I have used this method of research to render both the points of view of the researchers and the ones of the practitioners from the field of education.

6. Findings

The development of the emotional resilience enhances new ways of expression of the pupils' emotions and welfare. The emotional resilience does not stick only to understanding and recognizing the emotions or the emotional expression or adjustment, but it implies a complex interaction teacher-pupil, pupil-pupil, adopting an attitude of respect and openness towards the others.

In table 01, we can notice the main characteristics of the concepts having been analyzed. As we have mentioned, the child's resilience is closely correlated with the protection factors or, on the other hand, with the high-risk factors.

Table 01. The characteristics of the analyzed concepts

Resilience	Emotional Resilience	Protective factors	Risk factors	Educational style
-adaptation	-perseverance	-easy temperament	-difficult temperament	Emotional-improvisational
-networking	-self-esteem	-school competence	-lack of control	Rationale-pedagogical
-positivism	-optimism	-control	-school failure	Emotional – pedagogical and rationale-improvisational
-anticipation	-sense of humour	-family/secure attachment	-family/unsecure attachment	
-autonomy	-manipulation of troubling emotions	-external support	-abandonment	

If we look up attentively, many characteristics are to be found in each category. A good resilience considers all the factors presented. It is very important to have a connection among them.

7. Conclusion

Qualitative education is outlined through the efficiency of the teachers and the pupils' scores, in the context of the presence of strong interpersonal relationships. In this respect, the teacher-pupil relationships are essential for enhancing a positive school climate and for a good emotional development of the pupils. In the social system of education and schooling, the teachers always relate to the ones they educate, thus they establish relations of cooperation with the pupils, their parents and to the other interested factors of the society. Not only do they educate at the teacher's desk in the classroom, but with each relational contact with the pupils and their parents they carry out a work of growth and development, of leadership and direction.

The teachers engage in the activity in front of human psychic individuals who are in thorough training and development. This is the point the necessity of a maximum responsibility derives towards the teacher's behaviour and interventions.

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