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TEACHER'S AND STUDENTS PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS - THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

The central message of this article is that the process of self-knowledge and personal development are essential for both teachers and students involved in educational activities. We understand by self-knowledge and personal development the acquisition of skills that include: self-awareness, assertive communication, personal and change management, empathy, relationship and conflict resolution and decision-making. In the present paper we argue that the efficient functioning in the current social-professional environment is facilitated by the self-knowledge capacity and personal development process of each teacher. Teachers need to have a range of life skills that can help students to face the challenges of everyday life. Included in this concept are both current needs and social-emotional maturity. Personal development encourages the stimulation and promotion of emotional intelligence. One of the most important tasks of the teacher is to induce his students the desire to learn throughout their lives. To achieve this, teachers need to demonstrate commitment and enthusiasm for personal development. Through active involvement in their own personal development process, teachers will have the necessary skills to adequately support their pupils' development needs. The paper presents also previous studies and research on the personal development of teachers and pupils from other educational systems, the importance of personal development for the teaching profession and conclusions.

Keywords: Personal development needs, self-knowledge, change, growth, teaching abilities.

1. Introduction

Growth involves learning that is sometimes natural in terms of development, sometimes opportunistic and sometimes planned (Day, 1999). Teacher development needs vary depending on the circumstances in which they work, their personal and professional history and, last but not least, their mood. Teacher development needs relate to the relationship between their experience, expertise and commitment on the one hand and the ability of teachers to practice their emotional intelligence in teaching situations and their pedagogical tact, on the other hand. Therefore, an important problem for teacher trainers is how they manage to contribute to the development of teachers abilities (Gilroy & Day, 1993; Evans & Penney, 1994).

2. Personal development and self-knowledge - conceptualization

Personal development involves knowledge, attitudes, habits, relationships and behaviors that can be used in any area of life. This involves thought processes, managing emotions, values and relationships, together. Starting from the previous quote, we begin by claiming that man by his nature, has the capacity to develop, to choose his own destiny, to validate his qualities and positive characteristics inasmuch as the environment creates the conditions for updating self.

Teachers need to have a range of life skills that can help students to face the challenges of everyday life. Included in this concept are both current needs and social-emotional maturity. Personal development encourages the stimulation and promotion of emotional intelligence. "Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize your own feelings and feelings of others, self-motivation, and the management of your own emotions and social relationships." (Goleman, 2008).

Personal development has been defined by various authors as a result of a process that depends and promotes reflection in an individual towards a certain level of self-awareness and self-acceptance. This includes the individual's willingness to accept full responsibility for growth (or lack thereof) and commitment to take appropriate action (Chander & Singh, 1993; Hawthorne, 1994; Monaghan, McCoy, Young, & Fraser, ; Waters, 1996). Personal development also happens with experience, but it can be problematic without an organized management plan. Personal development is defined as the consequence of engaging in actions within an intentional life management process that promotes and depends on reflecting life in particular and professional contexts (Goldspink, D., 2007).

The ability to constantly balance life inside and outside the workplace as understanding, reflection and a careful provision (Hawthorne, 1994; Tsangaridou & Siedentop, 1995). Rice and Tucker (1986) suggests that this balancing process can be called "life management." "Life management can be defined as a system whereby the person's values, goals, standards, and resources change or are optimized through day-to-day decisions and intentional actions to improve the quality of a person's life." (Rice & Tucker, 1986, p. 6). This is the ability of a person to work with all the roles of the current life (for example, parent, employee, neighbor, etc.), in harmony and in the continuous search for personal development.

Teachers react and reflect every day on a multitude of situations. Reflection and consequence, the action may vary depending on the situation and the specific proactive reflection of the teachers "is behavior

directed towards objectives using decision-making, evaluation, planning and organizing processes to guide the used resources and to improve the quality of life "(Rice & Tucker, 1986, p. 6). The most common ways of change and personal development are:

✓ change through crisis phenomena;

✓ change through the learning process;

✓ change as a form of development;

✓ change as a way of modernization.

Self-knowledge is of particular importance in personal development. The process of self-knowledge is the confrontation of the impressions of oneself with those of others and the extraction of a realistic conclusion, as well as the balancing of the personal achievements, potentials, qualities and individual traits that the individual is aware of and have value.

In order for self-knowledge to be objective, the individual must have the psychological maturity to make it, to know and to interpret correctly the defining characteristics of the personality, the individual methods and techniques of evaluation, the mechanisms of compensation and self-stimulation of some insufficiently developed features (Băban, 2001).

Self-knowledge is a product of the maturation and diversification of the experiences of the self in contact with the world and a discontinuous process of accumulations, reorganizations, reciprocal adaptations of the individual to the social reality. Self-learning is learned, and school is the main place to accomplish this process, along with family, circle of friends, etc.

In the field of external messages confirming (or not) their own capabilities and traits, any person includes his/her own findings as a result of his successful or failed activity. The process of self-knowledge has its dynamics marked by subjectivity, reevaluations, corrections, confirmations, value re-hierarchies, and can be translated into psychological support for the action of carrying out career projects, or it can remain a mere act of passive introspection.

Self-knowledge, self-determination and self-evaluation are mechanisms by which the individual learns to know his/her potential, motivation, aspirations, in a word, the skills that will allow him to adapt to the profession he/she has chosen and prepared for.

For teachers, these skills are:

✓ to develop and internalize their knowledge of personal characteristics and abilities (to oneself and to others);

✓ to prove the understanding of the relationship between personal qualities and skills and education (a field for which he / she has been oriented);

✓ be able to describe in positive terms (skills that exists and skills that that need to be to practice) and be able to recognize some weak, undeveloped or non-existent points;

✓ to know what the physical, mental, emotional state of health is, and how to preserve it;

✓ be able to assume responsibilities, tasks, duties, duties towards himself, family, school, community;

✓ be able to start, maintain and develop communication, support, cooperation with students, colleagues, other people;

✓ be able to identify the problems encountered in the relationship with students, parents, colleagues, find solutions and get involved in solving them;

✓ demonstrate the ability to listen to others, understand their messages, and express their own;

✓ be able to choose those programs, optional modules of continuous professional training that fit it and which will help in the development of less valid skills and respond to its interests (Băban, A., 2001).

In conclusion, self-knowledge is a process that: develops with age due to the experience; which does not end with adolescence or youth; that combines cognitive, assertive and motivational with strong environmental influences.

3. Previous studies and research on the personal development of teachers and pupils from other educational systems

The curriculum for personal development is conceived in a number of educational departments around the world, such as the Curriculum Council (1998), Department of Education and Employment and Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (2000), Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2003; New Jersey State Department of Education, 2004; Ontario Ministry of Education, 1985). The curricula developed by the entities outlined above have different titles, namely: personal management, life management, personal life management, but essentially describe personal development (Goldspink, 2007).

In Ontario, Canada, the personal development curriculum provided in schools provides students with the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to manage their private lives so they are productive, satisfactory and meaningful without too much stress (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1985, p. 2). Students have been taught life skills, for example, decision-making, goal setting, communication, time management, organizational, problem-solving, conflict resolution and interpersonal skills (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1998, p. 31).

In the UK, the National Curriculum (2000) provided teachers, students, parents, employers and wider communities with a clear and shared understanding of the skills and knowledge that young people should acquire in schools. Thus, the Department for Education and Employment and Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 2000, included two general objectives: to provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and to evolve; to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to prepare all students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life. Throughout the four main stages of schooling, from the age of 5 to 16, P.S.H.E. (Personal, Social, and Health Education). The curriculum, as part of a combination of curricula, covers a wide range of topics that contribute to: developing trust, responsibility, and many of their skills, preparing them to play a role Actively as citizens, to develop a healthy and safe lifestyle; To develop positive relationships and to respect differences between people.

In the US, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has implemented a series of learning experiences for the personal development of pupils in their schools. Within this framework, the main development axes include: functions and interrelated of social systems; Management skills and well-

being of life. These are part of the five major axes that make up their curriculum on Physical Education and Health.

In Australia, New South Wales (NSW), the Council of Studies has developed curriculum of K-6 (1999a), 7-10 (2003) and 6th (1999c) governmental schools for Personal Development, Health and Physical Education. Within this school curriculum, teachers were asked to teach personal development as part of the Healthy Learning and Physical Education area. The purpose of this school program was to develop in each student knowledge and understanding, skills and values, as well as the attitudes necessary to lead a healthy, active and fulfilled life. In this respect, the curriculum targeted basic training for students to take a responsible and productive role in society (NSW, 1999a). The Personal Development Program, Health and Physical Education has an important contribution to NSW's primary curriculum, directly targeting the development of the entire personality. It incorporates all aspects of a person, welfare, social, mental, physical and spiritual development (NSW, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c, 2003).

This approach to the curriculum for personal development can also be found in Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (2006), South Australia (Department of Education and Employment (2001)) and in Queensland (State of Queensland , 2005).

According to Goldspink (2007), the Western Australian Curriculum was launched in 1998, consisting of a comprehensive statement and eight statements referring to the expected learning outcomes for all pupils, from the kindergarten up to the age of 12 From Western Australia. Four of the thirteen learning outcomes specified in the Curriculum are related to personal development. Specifically, they affirm that students:

(6) visualize consequences, develop lateral thinking, recognize opportunities and potential, and are prepared to test options;

(11) harness and implement practices that promote personal development and well-being;

(12) are self-motivated and confident in approaching the learning process and are able to work individually and in collaboration;

(13) recognize that everyone has the right to feel valued in a safe manner, while understanding their own rights and obligations, and behaving responsibly.

(Curriculum Council, 1998, p. 19)

All of these studies highlight the importance of teacher training specifically for addressing aspects of personal development of students so that they acquire skills that include: self-awareness, assertive communication, personal management and change, empathy, relationship and conflict resolution and decision making.

4. The importance of personal development for the teaching profession

We want to highlight through this article the importance of the personal development of teachers and their students. The first aspect is aimed primarily at initial and continuous teacher training for the purpose of professional optimization and the second relates to the continuation of the implementation of the personal development classes in the primary cycle and the introduction of this field both at lower secondary and

upper secondary level. Through active involvement in their own personal development process, teachers will have the necessary skills to adequately support their pupils' development needs.

Thus, recent research evidence (Leitch et al, 2005) suggests that a personal development program for teachers is more likely to be successful when it includes: a leadership that appreciates the importance of personal development; a holistic approach involving the entire school; positive relationships between staff and students; promoting a positive environment in school and classroom; teaching strategies that promote active participation and independent learning among pupils; a school curriculum that contains concepts such as: risk and protection factors, life skills, connection and resilience; effective partnerships with the community.

Also (Leitch et al, 2005) indicates the following benefits for students of providing personal development programs in schools: a strong relationship between healthy behaviors and improved learning; optimizing attitudes towards school and greater involvement in the activities proposed by the school; improved thinking skills and problem solving; greater adherence to health-related behaviors.

Starting to assume that a teacher should be a good psycho-pedagogue to give birth to an interactive and formative universe for its students, we present a number of advantages of personal teacher development:

✓ Better adaptation to the requirements of school and social environment;

✓ Decrease of the burn-out phenomenon;

✓ Increasing self-esteem;

✓ Consolidation of well-being and management of negative emotions;

✓ Reducing stress and acquiring techniques for stress management;

✓ Developing the ability to creatively solve problems;

✓ Optimizing communication and communication skills;

✓ Improve interactions with students, student - parents, and work colleagues.

Although important, the personal development of teachers may be marked by certain limits that address the specific age of the adult and the social implications of the various roles played by teachers: the diminution of curiosity, which requires a restructuring of the information according to the teacher's needs and interests; the memory capacity of the adult is lower, which implies an optimal logical and psycho-pedagogical structure of the information volume; reforming or shaping the personality of teachers is often difficult because the adult is sometimes characterized by conservatism, stiffness and increased resistance to change; the need to permanently duplicate the theoretical discourse with examples of genuine practical relevance; lowering the authoritarian power of the teacher, on the one hand, due to the often small difference of age between the educator and the educated and, on the other hand, because the social roles deeply mark the personality of the adults.

5. Conclusion

In this respect a possible conclusion is set by Diac G. "The teacher, with his specific psycho-moral, attitude-behavioral features, is one of the essential components of the educational process. The complex

activity that teachers carry out, and consequently the knowledge, skills, qualities that they possesses or must possess, has provoked and still maintains numerous conceptual and/or action disputes. ... In this context, the teacher has to be prepared in such a way as to satisfy the numerous and high demands exerted at the social level. That is why it was considered that "being a teacher" should be understood in the sense of "becoming a teacher", that is to transform a profession into a career. The activity of a teacher is one of the most complex of the various activities that human carries out, being characterized not only by an instrumental dimension (knowledge, skills) but also by a profoundly human dimension, revealed by the set of values, attitudes, feelings, which the teacher expresses voluntarily or not in the school space "(Diac, G., in Cucoş, C., (coord.), 2008, p. 610).

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