

Violence in schools: what are the lessons for teacher education?

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Abstract

Considering that teachers play a fundamental role in overcoming violence in schools, this research identified adolescents' perceptions of their teachers' actions. The qualitative investigation involved immersion in a government-run lower secondary school in the urban outskirts of Brasília (Brazilian capital), documental analysis, live observation, semi-structured individual interviews and focus group sessions. The results detected the use of classroom methodologies typified by excessive oral exposition and copies, scarcely compatible with adolescents' aspirations to achieve autonomy and a protagonist role. Teachers' impersonal relations with their students and difficulty in addressing classroom conflicts contribute to the occurrence and aggravation of episodes of violence and indiscipline. Proposals for changes in teacher education are based on that analysis.

Keywords: School violence. Indiscipline. Adolescents. Lower Secondary Education. Teacher education.

1 Introduction¹

How do teachers perform in violent schools and neighborhoods? Do they contribute towards solving conflicts or aggravate them? What can a teacher do to deal with tense situations like those analyzed below? How students see their school? This in-depth case study conducted in an official school in the urban outskirts of Brasília shows how different forms of violence in and against school and practiced by the school itself continue to be latent and/or explicit problems aggravated by socially vulnerable contexts. The first perception shows that the school, for adolescents, looks more like a fortress or prison, with iron grilles on

¹ All names are fictitious.

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all windows and grey walls; it is very hot inside. An observant visitor immediately notices the security guard peepholes. The school management team works in a centralized, bureaucratic and authoritarian manner in its efforts to prevent unruly behavior: a vision of the student as a potential offender is subjacent to the planning of timeframes and movements.

Listening to the students is somewhat unusual in research, especially when it involves adolescents (ZAGURY, 1999; CUSHMAN, 2003; 2008 CUSHMAN; ROGERS, 2008; BARRÈRE, 2013) in vulnerable situations permeated by criminality and the presence of organized crime. The specialized literature identifies adolescence² as the stage of life most intensely associated with violent episodes in schools (OLWEUS, 1998; CUSHMAN, 2003; ABRAMOVAY, 2006; CUSHMAN; ROGERS, 2008), especially in lower secondary education (students in the 11 to 14 age group). As students begin to enter adolescence, they tend towards more violent behavior, especially when their limits are hazy or poorly defined (ABRAMOVAY, 2006; LÓPEZ CASTEDO; DOMÍNGUEZ ALONSO; ÁLVAREZ ROALES, 2010), and it commonly takes the form of direct aggression. Precisely for that reason Álvarez et al. (2006) focused on students' perceptions as they discern aspects that go unnoticed by teaching staff. Furthermore, those authors considered that students are not the only protagonists of violence; educators are equally involved – students and teachers, the two main protagonists of the schooling institution itself.

2 Indiscipline, conflict and different forms of violence

The idea of indiscipline is immediately associable with discipline and tends to be defined by the negation or privation of the latter term or by disorder stemming from breaking the established rules (ESTRELA, 2002). In line with that, Fante (2005) considers that undisciplined acts are behaviors directed against informal and formal school rules, the latter usually being set out in the School Regulations. Therefore, they correspond to the absence or denial of a desirable behavior (FORTUNA, 2006).

Monotony and the lack of any apparent meaning in the school curricula are major contributory factors to the occurrence of indiscipline and violent acts (GOMES, 2012). To compensate for them, adolescents turn to their IT gadgets, play activities and inconvenient pranks. Conflict arises from their actions when

² The term adolescence is used here with the chronological limits determined by the Brazilian Child and Adolescent Statute (*Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente* – ECA) (BRASIL, 1990), which considers adolescence to be the period from 12 to 18 years old. It also took into account the Pan-American Health Organization and the World Health Organization (ORGANIZACIÓN PANAMERICANA DE LA SALUD, 1985) classification, which divides it into pre-adolescence (age 10 to 14) and adolescence as such (age 15 to 19). The term is distinct from the term 'youth' insofar as it is basically characterized by a biological process and notably by cognitive development and the structuring of the individual's personality.

teachers who are responsible for keeping noise levels down and maintaining order in the classroom find it difficult to manage outbreaks of such behavior. It is not unusual for teachers, unable to recognize the facets of such processes, to blame the students for creating disorder, thereby generating and getting involved in conflicts and acts of violence. By doing so, they create tension in the relations among students and between students and teachers.

Furthermore, indiscipline leads to conflicts which, if not mediated by an adult, can result in even greater violence. Thus violence and conflict have come to be considered as practically synonymous and peace as being merely the absence of conflict (MENA; JÁUREGUI; MORENO, 2011). Conflict, however, is part of our personal lives and so it is present in teaching institutions too (CHRISPINO, 2007). It occurs when individuals attribute different values to the same action and react differently to the same act (CHRISPINO, A.; CHRISPINO, R., 2011) or because of divergence of interests, desires and aspirations in the relations among individuals.

Ortega and Del Rey (2002) consider that conflict stemming from social interaction does not necessarily constitute the phenomenon of violence, although when not properly addressed it can often erode the climate of peaceful, sociable coexistence and generate multiple forms of violence, making it difficult to recognize the origin and nature of the problem that gave rise to it.

Apart from the existence of interpersonal conflicts, widely discussed in the literature, there are also intrapersonal ones. They arise from the need for power, or belonging, or security; or they stem from poor communication, low self-esteem, the inability to express feelings and emotions and other situations (MENA; JÁUREGUI; MORENO, 2011).

Thus Fante (2005) states that violence may be direct (against persons, interpersonal) or indirect (against utensils, goods or possessions, stealing); it can also be implicit, disguised or explicit, and occasionally physical or psychological, according to the definitions proffered by Calvo Hernández, Marren Rodríguez and Garda Correa (2001-2002) and Chauí (2002). The various forms of violence occur at the end of a chain of interrelated problems.

Teaching plays an essential role in the education and formation not only of children and adolescents but of young people and adults too (UNESCO, 2015). Whenever teachers are not clearly aware of their social position or of the importance of their role in the formation and education of their students, they tend to contradict expectations and be violent towards students, or leave them to their own devices,

ignoring episodes or taking measures that only foster more conflict and more violence. Many teachers feel that the students are “undeserving”: they have “gone astray” like trees that have been planted straight, but have grown in the wrong direction.

Accordingly, the students identify their teachers as collaborating with the indiscipline and violence in the classrooms and hold them co-responsible for the degradation of the school social environment and the conflicts that arise among the students (adults and adolescents). In that light, it is understandable that the teachers, not having been prepared to handle a variety of such situations, use their authority badly and react abusively, using equally undesirable methods, because the students report that their teachers use insults, oppression and violence, contributing to the cumulative downgrading spiral (CUSHMAN, 2003; CUSHMAN; ROGERS, 2008). Either side may set the spiral in motion; after all, what came first, the chicken or the egg?

3 About teacher education

The very vastness of the literature on teacher education underscores its importance for the education of children, adolescents and adults. In the current panorama there is a glaring need to revise the initial part of the teacher qualification process to salvage teachers’ credibility in the eyes of society and to overcome violence in schools. Ghedin, Almeida and Leite (2008) consider that we cannot blame teachers for the school’s failures and misfortunes without first examining the conditions of their initial qualification process. Gatti (2014a) points to the fragility of teacher education, how it has never come up to expectations, and that is not only in regard to preparing future teachers to address the cognitive aspects of their students’ education, but also to address their students’ social-affective development. Furthermore, the teaching courses fail to provide them with sufficient knowledge of students’ cultures and motivations. That author goes on to identify the divergence between the formal pedagogical projects in the teaching degree courses and the curricular structures effectively being offered, which apparently merely provide a thin varnish of pedagogical qualification entirely insufficient to bring about any kind of change in the face of the major challenges present in classrooms today. There is, therefore, an outstanding need to verify the lack of integration in the qualification that a teacher needs to work in Basic Education. That means we cannot call on teachers to be “saviors of the nation” nor can we make scapegoats of them.

Nevertheless, surveys conducted by Serpa, Morais and Cabral (1999) highlight how sensitive contexts permeated by indiscipline, conflicts and violence become the primary and most worrying problems for teachers, especially in the early years of their careers. They believe that happens because teachers have not been duly

prepared to manage such situations. On the other hand, some research has revealed that part of the violent conduct on the part of teachers, when faced with violence themselves, could be avoided (ROGERS, 2009). Being unable to withstand the malaise provoked by the violence they encounter (ESTEVE, 1992; 1999; JESUS, 2007), some of them abandon the profession in the first five years of their career, as shown by a survey in the USA (CUSHMAN, 2003), corroborating the evidence reported by Mena, Jáuregui and Moreno (2011).

Although there is no ready-made teaching model available to be applied, there is an outstanding need for a qualification process that prepares the teacher to handle uncertainty, the unusual, the heterogeneous and to minimize the gap separating teachers' qualification from the reality in which they will be expected to perform (GRILLO, 2004). It is not a question of providing some kind of prescription, but much more of enabling them to understand and deal with the facts, ethically and scientifically, for it would be ingenuous to expect ready-made answers for such a wide variety of complex and uncertain situations. For that reason, their capacity-building process needs to teach them how to teach, how to act, how to coexist sociably and how to be (DELORS et al., 1998).

4 Methodology

The reason for selecting this particular school was its history of violence and also the high level of criminality in the surrounding region. The probe involved 89 students, 29 males and 50 females, in lower secondary education (11-14 years or 6th-9th graders), all of whom took part voluntarily (RICHARDSON, 1989) when informed of the theme of the investigation. Forty-nine of the students studied during the morning school period (6th and 7th grades) and 40 in the afternoon period (8th and 9th grades). All participants were in the 11 to 16 age group with the following distribution by grades: 6th grade, 21 students; 7th grade, 28; 8th grade, 14, and 9th grade, 26. Ten of the students were out of phase with their schooling years, that is, they were in lower grades than they should be for their age, which made them potential recruiters of younger students for violent actions. More than half reported that they lived in towns in the neighboring state. Data was obtained by means of an 8-month long immersion in the school environment in 2016.

Given the nature of the problem, we decided to conduct a qualitative study (RICHARDSON, 1989) involving a simple case study and triangulation of the data (STAKE, 2007) obtained from the documental analysis of the Pedagogical Policy Project, the Internal Regulations and the disciplinary records of each class. Five individual interviews and ten group interviews were conducted and there were 80 hours of systematic observation. The selection of classes and teachers

to be observed was based on students' suggestions in the focus group sessions and the individual interviews. Systematic observation took place throughout the period of the study in a bid to register occurrences of indiscipline and violence and observe how the teachers acted/reacted.

After organizing the data, the next step was to create categories and themes from down up, grouping the data in information units according to Creswell (2010). Those procedures led to the emergence of more relevant categories for content analysis purposes. The latter is a set of communication analysis techniques representing a systematic, objective effort to obtain a description of the contents of messages (BARDIN, 2011).

5 Results and analysis

We could see from the adolescents' statements that the outbursts of violence construed themselves as multi-factor, multi-cause problems. Indiscipline, conflicts and violence turn the classroom into a very complex and multifaceted space. There are various forms of violence, but, to the adolescents, the conflicts and violence have much more to do with teacher-student relations than with relations among the students themselves. Irrespective of the teacher or the school period involved, certain problems are repeated and so are the correct or incorrect strategies adopted to 'solve' them. The strategies are mainly reactive, such as sending the student to the principal's office or simply putting the student out of the class. Those ways of getting rid of the student suggest a desire to see them gone, to eliminate the 'other', the very same feeling the adolescents experience in the conflicts. These are measures that usually generate negative effects and reveal a latent state of tension among the groups: an adult should think in terms of prevention rather than reacting in the heat of the moment. It is equally dangerous for the educator to incur the hostility of the students by exercising his or her notably fragile authority in an effort to show that the teacher is the boss in the classroom and the students' lot is just to obey. Other measures like reducing students' scores in tests or obliging students to carry out other school tasks are ethically and pedagogically wrong. One should never subtract points from a student who already experiences difficulty. In so doing the adults weaken their authority even more. The older the adolescents are, the more often and the more intense the incidents of conflict and violence against teachers are. As students grow older, their desire to be protagonists increases and so does their intolerance to being ridiculed in public.

In addition to their more usual reactive behavior, educators were seen to involve themselves in conflicts in various other ways. Some of them ignore the fact,

pretend they have not seen it and leave it to the students themselves to deal with it. Others actually encourage students to retaliate. Only very few teachers actually resorted to dialogue to solve problems in the classroom, including the problems identified during the observations of classes. By bringing the adolescents together to listen to them, educators help them and the students, in turn, collaborate more in class and respect their teachers more. That explained the reiterated manifestations of affection and recognition of those teachers who knew how to exercise their authority without resorting to authoritarianism and without jeopardizing the ambience of the classes or arousing the hostility of the students. So the question arises as to how those few teachers manage to do that in the very same school and the same context. Do they perhaps have some innate gift or were they well prepared to work as professional teachers? Brasil (2013) and Palazzo (2015) identify the teaching profession as one of the easiest to get in because the requirements in the university admission processes are less severe. As a result, the occupation has come to have lower social prestige. However, among other aspects they also found that some chose the profession because it offers opportunities for mutual learning and emotional gratification. However, they need to be prepared to find themselves in vulnerable situations and facing other difficult aspects of the profession. Ens, Eyng and Gisi (2009) and Gomes and Pereira (2009) found that students in teacher education were apprehensive about violence in schools and their lack of qualification to address it.

Teachers repeatedly let students know that the teaching profession was the cause of their unhappiness and suffering and that they were in it for lack of better opportunities. Such statements led us to ask the adolescents who among them would like to be a teacher. Only seven of the 89 respondents wanted to be teachers, explaining that it was a profession that enabled one to help improve society and to qualify others and that a teacher was a person who could make a difference in the lives of his or her students. The others, however, rejected the profession because of the violence in school, practiced by the school and against the school, and also because it was a risky profession and poorly esteemed by society, as they could see in their daily lives and in the media. They also referred to the adolescents' difficult temperament and rebelliousness: "if it is difficult today just imagine what it will be like in a few years! That means you really have to like the profession a lot" (student André, 14 years old, in the 9th grade, speaking in a focus group session). Those are just some of the many reasons that lead them to wish "something better" for themselves. Other students pointed out that teachers choose the profession even though they are well aware of all the drawbacks or pointed out that people should find out more about the profession before deciding to become teachers:

I would advise them to get a qualification in some other field because being a teacher is hell! You need to think twice before you make up your mind. Adolescents are difficult and there is nothing saintly about them. What is worse is that there are teachers who get their qualifications even though they know all about that... They still go on and become teachers. It's hard to understand, isn't it? (student Adão, 12 years old, 7th grade, speaking in a focus group session).

Another exacerbating factor was the teachers' isolation, each one in their own bubble, especially the more-recently qualified ones who are not willing to or cannot manage to listen to those who have been in the profession for much longer. The students identified points that should be included in teacher education: more knowledge about adolescence and the problems it implies; getting to know more about indiscipline, conflicts and violence in the classroom; learning to give more meaningful lessons and preparing teachers to be more human, understanding and humble and willing to acknowledge their own incompleteness and shortcomings.

The adolescents also spoke about the way teachers handle delicate situations. In some classes the ambience of conflict is more present than in others precisely because the educators intervene in different ways, just as the students, in turn, contribute to aggravating or overcoming situations in different ways. The examples of how students perceive their teachers during their classroom experiences are decisive in determining whether the teaching profession attracts them as a career for themselves (FORMOSINHO; NIZA, 2009; CANDAU et al., 2013). That is why it is equally important to review the postures of educators engaged in educating future teachers who, whether they realize it or not, are practicing teaching by example and expressing all its nuances of light and shade.

It was apparent that, in view of their inadequate preparation, teachers adopted reactive measures such as those previously mentioned, thereby confirming the fragility and insufficiency of present day teaching degree courses to prepare teachers to handle present day classrooms (GATTI, 2014b). Indeed the classroom and the corresponding "lesson-ism" together with the anachronistic measure of "class hours" should make way for other learning environments and more active methods to guide the students' education processes. Instead of such changes leading to fewer jobs for teachers, they would actually increase the need for tutors. With that, there must be a reduction in the use of the typical 'expository' teaching method, sometimes undertaken in situations of chaos as observed during the research. That would avoid work-induced professional health problems such as sore throat conditions. From the methodological standpoint, the oral expository

classes coupled with the mechanical activity of copying, instead of keeping the students busy and quiet, actually constitute the most serious obstacle to learning and to achieving good student-teacher relations. That is because they lead to pure monologue rather than to any form of dialogue: the adults conjugate the verbs of their own actions in the active voice while the students are relegated to the passive voice, when, in fact, they are anxious for autonomy and a protagonist role for themselves.

To sum up, the students identified 11 factors as being the main causes of conflict with their teachers:

1. Emotive behavior that leads the teacher to act in an authoritarian way to address situations of conflict – such actions include the arbitrary imposition of rules without due clarification.
2. Difficulty to listen to adolescents in the contexts of their singularities and the plurality of their belonging, in addition to practices of exclusions and heterogenization. Groups with different social origins are also treated differently. Students are excluded, ridiculed and accused without any in-depth knowledge of the facts. Such practices go hand in hand with a negative, prejudiced aura that educators associate with their vision of the students, provoking rebellion, anger, undesirable conduct, threats and outbreaks of revolt.
3. Imposition of unfair and unequal punishments coupled with an authoritarian maxim: the teacher, despite his or her precarious authority, is there to teach and command and also has special rights; the student is there to learn and obey.
4. Constant challenging of the adolescents in addition to failing to recognize what they are capable of and threats to impose punishments that are counterproductive for the students' personal and emotional development and for the teacher's performance as an educator.
5. Unwillingness to maintain relations with the students, failure to put themselves in the student's place, to get to know them, disinterest in overcoming the intergeneration shock and difficulty to accept criticism or opinions about their work.
6. Attributing blame for their personal problems and their lack of success in the classroom to the students, without any attempt at self-assessment or submitting to the assessment of others over the course of the year.

7. Lack of motivation and general unwillingness on the part of the teachers. Their work is basically structured around the monologue and that fosters indiscipline and conflicts in the classroom, as well as a feeling of revolt in the students for being unable to express their ideas and concerns or to carry out activities that would give them an opportunity to play the protagonist role they desire.
8. Unethical approach to administering problems arising between teachers and students insofar as teachers communicate such problems to colleagues in other classes. They also ‘complicate’ the situation of the students in the eyes of the school administration and their parents by exaggerating the facts or creating negative situations that affect parent-child relations even more. It is almost beyond words what students feel in the face of the alliance of teachers and the school administration team, which actually intensifies the quarrels among the students themselves (divide and rule?).
9. Failure to set a convincing example for the students. Teachers should follow the rules just as the adolescents are expected to do, given that values such as tolerance, peace, equality, respect for diversity and for others need to be present not only in words but also in examples (GOMES, 2001).
10. Indifference and neglect in regard to incidents in the classroom. Failure to support students in the endeavor to find solutions for conflicts and failure to provide guidance to help them to do so, but, instead, merely suggesting they sort it out among themselves by retaliating or in whatever way they wish.
11. Bullying practiced against students in the form of ironies or jokes in poor taste that can denigrate the students’ image and lower their self-esteem, all of which tends to foster further conflict.

In that scenario the students considered there was an urgent need to build teachers’ capacity to mediate conflicts, considering that naturalizing the facts only fuels further violence. Teaching staff fail to perceive the forms of violence they practice themselves or those that the school practices, while many other forms go undetected because of the “Law of Silence”, especially in regard to bullying. That is especially true when the teachers prefer not to see the student’s problems: “that’s their own business”. That was why the suicide committed by two Norwegian students led Olweus (1998) to investigate the phenomenon. It is also essential to qualify teachers for them to contemplate the integral formation of their students, which takes place in a variety of situations and depends on the

teachers' mediation for the students to learn to express themselves, respect the contrary opinion of others and tolerate one another, without any essential need for intimate friendship among those involved.

6 Where is the way out of the labyrinth?

The way out of this labyrinth involves rethinking teacher education and professional performance. The profession is going through a crisis involving great psychological suffering in a critical institution and, moreover, there is the crisis associated to adolescence and the extant social exclusion. Qualifying educators means preparing them to avoid becoming actors with roles of violence themselves. After all, even the drug dealers in the neighboring districts 'solved' the problem of violence by unleashing even more violence (information from the respondents). Teacher education and the teaching career, as they are today, need to be rigorously revised and an effort must be made to retrieve their social credibility. Indeed, Mattje (2011) underscores the fact that learning only brings about change in behavior when it is mediated by affectivity and by activities that enable students to put themselves in the other's place. Thus the archaic model of current teaching degree courses can hardly manage to establish the articulation between contents and teaching skills, between theory and practice. Today, future teachers have the last year of their course as a kind of appendix in which to put the knowledge they acquired into practice, and they have to do the obligatory work of re-signifying it unaided. Similarly, the successive specialization of scientific and artistic knowledge, ramified and compartmentalized, is an obstacle to the integration of study subjects so that the teachers' higher education already reveals to them the prospect of a curriculum that is simply fragmented instead of being complex but marked by interdisciplinarity.

For that reason, greater attention must be paid to teachers' curricula and due recognition, given the overriding need for more active methodologies for working with adolescents who need to be active, not passive, subjects in the classroom and in all other possible school spaces. One outstanding example observed in this research was that of a History teacher who innovated in the classroom and managed to involve all his students by means of a parody of the civil war based on the words of a song and the simple use of a guitar. That is an example of the kind of action that can make classes meaningful even with very few resources.

In terms of practical activities during the teacher education courses, the distance learning courses which have proliferated in recent years are even more deficient. What is worrying about this modality is the supervision of the trainee activities which do not contemplate essential aspects of the teaching activity, namely: building

a basis for teacher-student relations in daily face to face coexistence with groups of students, children and adolescents (GATTI; BARRETTO; ANDRÉ, 2011).

It is important to enable the future teacher to reflect on, and take an attitude towards problematic situations. Teacher qualification needs to include facing real or simulated situations in which they need to think up possible solutions. That also means that those intending to become teachers need to read constantly and keep themselves informed on current social problems and to form opinions on varied aspects of present day issues. Thus obligatory reading in teaching degree courses should include not only the standard text books but also general reading and researching as an essential and constant part of a teacher's professional life. The teacher educator is a mirror for the education of teaching degree students who will be working in lower secondary education and they, in turn, will be a mirror for the children and adolescents they teach.

Another feasible low-cost measure would be to involve future teachers in research groups, making it possible for them to recognize the value of research in their qualification process, participating in investigations alongside those taking their Masters or PhDs and, in that way, not only learning how research is undertaken but also getting to know and apply relevant research results. To that end it is important to instill the spirit of investigation right at the beginning of teacher education and not in the last two or three terms as is usually the case.

Another valuable measure would be to establish spaces in schools to connect newly qualified teachers with future teachers. As an example, they could help in class activities and take part in teachers' clinical sounding sessions, all of which would enable them to share the problems that are intrinsic to the teaching profession. In turn, working on the research projects would enable them to perceive that they, like the adolescents, are actually going in the wrong direction, insofar as whether they are aware of it or not, they are participating actors in the episodes of violence.

It is also necessary to include some kind of theoretical-practical qualification in the curriculum specifically about adolescence as such. Theories are alright but there must also be consequences and options that can be applied in practice. One of the students' main criticism was that the teachers know almost nothing about that and they seem to have forgotten everything about their own period of adolescence (GOMES, 2005). They need to know that, although certain events are common to all in that phase of life, adolescents are diverse individuals, each with their own skills, virtues, flaws, problems, weaknesses and preferences, in combinations that are unique to each individual. That will enable teachers to

understand the precautions they need to take in addressing and settling conflicts among students and between students and teachers. Furthermore, teachers must be made aware that adolescence begins roughly at the same time that the school organization changes from classes with a single teacher to classes with different teachers for each subject and that happens against a background of highly fragmented curricula. In other words, the school imposes a rupture at the same time as the students are experiencing another kind of rupture in their lives as they leave childhood and enter adolescence.

Another topic for reflection is the question of teachers' authority in view of the changes in society's values and the new culture of adolescents. Teachers need to acknowledge that they too are responsible for salvaging the lost authority instead of indiscriminately blaming the students for all the problems in the classroom. In that regard, in addition to the copious literature on the subject, there are various national and international films that can be screened to stimulate good discussions, reflections and other activities related to classroom problems and teachers' performances. Again, spaces for reflection on possible solutions for real problems could be created: videos recorded by students themselves, in their own visual and auditory languages, provide excellent opportunities for reflection and debate and so does participation in seminars and in actions in other schools in the education network.

Future teachers need to construct a kind of metacognition throughout the period of their university course by registering their process. That would lead to permanent meditation and to practicing their writing talents and, lastly, the same future professional should formulate intervention proposals. For that to become feasible, maximum importance should be placed on the trainee activities right from the beginning of the course. That proposal is designed to minimize the shock of reality, so common among teachers when they start out on their careers, and by reducing shock, facilitate their future professional performance (GOMES; PEREIRA, 2009).

Another aspect concerns the use of modern technology in the classroom. Not only the initial education but also the lifelong learning process needs to carry out the difficult mission of teaching future teachers or those already in activity to master the new technology so that they can "speak the same language as the adolescents". Indeed the continued education process needs to be conducted in the teachers' own schools and centered on their real problems, with due guidance from the education system. As a supplement, and only as a supplement to that, courses outside the school environment and other strategies could be adopted.

Notable features of current teaching degree courses are excessive emphasis placed on controlling student's marks, students' reading difficulties and students' lack of reading habit. The undergraduates do the tasks that are set for them but there is little room for reflection on situations and their possible solutions. Another point would be to qualify future teachers to prepare activities that allow their students to sublimate their pulsing energy by expressing their poorly elaborated emotions. Sports and drama are highly useful in that direction, especially insofar as they make it possible for a person to put him or herself in the place of the other (MATTJE, 2011).

Inculcating attitudes to improve interpersonal relations contributes towards professional development (BRASIL; GALVÃO, 2015). Qualification that addresses affective issues minimizes conflicts between students and teachers, because teachers will then be better oriented and learn to avoid expressing their preferences for one student over the other or voicing negative expectations about students' performances and behavior, not infrequently based on prejudice. In the same way, educating for Human Rights education will teach the teacher to respect others and sociably coexist with them in a way that ensures the enjoyment of collective and individual rights. It will make it possible to guarantee the rights of others, respect for diversity and the adoption of an ethical stance, thereby minimizing experiences of victimization or violence among them.

Other languages require their own space in the curriculum without, however, turning it into so much bric-a-brac, or a chest of drawers that are opened for the duration of the class and then shut again. The languages are multiple but, nevertheless, the school continues to operate a monopoly of the discourse. In regard to the adolescents' culture, it is important to build bridges, provide artistic-cultural spaces for the appreciation of beauty, art and culture, and do so as an important part of the individuals' qualification; it allows them to situate themselves better in the world. The adolescents themselves declared that their talents could be made better use of by studying art, music, painting and drama and that could also imbue the learning process with more meaning.

In addition to all the observations above, Zagury (1999) underscored the fragility of the schools responsible for teacher education: the lack of intellectual and emotional conditions to qualify the future teachers in view of all the problems they will have to face in their classrooms. Among them are questions associated with their poor ability to unfold subject contents and to address situations of violence between students and teachers, violence in the school in general, drug use and abuse, changes in social values, criminality, paucity of financial resources

even for the purchase of essential school materials, lack of parental support for students, non-existence of a suitable place to study in, children who work or who have to look after their homes and their siblings, new family models, intra-family violence and so on.

Those observations show that it is not enough to merely know the theories about how students learn. They show that working in lower secondary education, that is, grades 6 to 9, requires a lot more than one would imagine because it is precisely the phase with the greatest challenges and the worst and most frequent episodes of indiscipline and violence. Being a teacher calls for far more than mere technical skills; it requires emotional and relational skills as well.

Another aspect that calls for serious revision is the evaluations made during the course, because most of the times future teachers end up carrying out a series of activities and at times report on fictitious trainee activities that did not actually take place, filling out bureaucratic forms, usually signed off immediately by the collaborating school in order to rid themselves of the trainee as soon as possible, and the confection of portfolios of little or no value at the end of the course.

A thorough review of all these points and various others would contribute towards overcoming the problem of violence in schools in the sense of minimizing feelings of fear and apprehension, insecurity, inability, professional failure, loneliness, disenchantment and despair that are felt at the beginning of teachers' professional trajectory. There is an overall need therefore to effectively revise teachers' initial education (BRASIL; GALVÃO, 2015).

7 Conclusion

The data shows that the problem of violence in the classrooms is largely related to teacher education, because the respective behaviors reveal the teachers' lack of basic fundamentals on which to act. Accordingly, the future teacher needs to have opportunities to experience sensitive environments by participating in them from the very beginning of the qualifying process in order to learn how to deal with a variety of situations in practice and eventually be capable of carrying out the role of educating students satisfactorily. Society requires teachers that are better prepared to address and deal with unforeseeable events and perform in a space marked by uncertainties, which is the classroom (NÓVOA, 1999). They must have a well-developed ability to face conflicts in the classroom (ESTEVE, 1992).

Furthermore, the research results show that physical and financial resources, albeit indispensable, are not sufficient on their own to guarantee the quality of teaching work. More radical changes involve the web of social relations inside the schools and the values that oversee, underlie and guide them on both sides, that of the teachers and that of the students. Authoritarianism, monologues, emphasis on control and punishments, mechanical tasks merely designed to keep the students quiet, mirror to some extent the condition of the surrounding society in a democracy that is still immature. For their part, in the course of the survey, the adolescents did not fail to acknowledge that they too contribute towards the existence of a climate of conflict, considering that some students “do not give a damn about anything” (that is, students disturb their own classmates), because the school is uninteresting to them and what they are supposed to learn does not seem to have any practical value at all. For all those reasons, teacher education needs to go far beyond the indispensable mastery of the subject contents. It is a long process in the course of the individual’s professional life that involves learning to know oneself, learning to know others and developing a commitment to think through teaching practices in a way that ensures they can contribute to the formative aspects of students’ education, culminating in their ‘learning to be’.

Violências escolares: que aprendemos para a formação de professores?

Resumo

Considerando fundamental o papel dos docentes para superar as violências escolares, esta pesquisa identificou como adolescentes percebem as ações dos seus professores. Trata-se de uma investigação qualitativa, por meio de imersão numa escola com anos finais do ensino fundamental da periferia de Brasília, capital do Brasil. Realizaram-se análise documental, observação e entrevistas individuais semiestruturadas, além de grupos focais. Os resultados apontam para o uso de metodologias pouco compatíveis com as aspirações adolescentes de autonomia e protagonismo, com excesso de exposição oral e cópias. As relações impessoais dos professores com os alunos, aliadas às dificuldades de lidar com conflitos na sala de aula, contribuem para violências e indisciplina surgirem e se agravarem. Daí fluem propostas para alterar a formação docente.

Palavras-chave: *Violência escolar. Indisciplina. Adolescentes. Ensino fundamental. Formação de professores.*

Violencia en las escuelas: ¿cuáles son las lecciones para la formación docente?

Resumen

Teniendo en cuenta que los docentes desempeñan un papel fundamental en la superación de la violencia en las escuelas, esta investigación identificó las percepciones de los adolescentes sobre las acciones de sus docentes. La investigación cualitativa involucró la inmersión en una escuela secundaria inferior administrada por el gobierno en las afueras urbanas de Brasília (capital brasileña), análisis documental, observación en vivo, entrevistas individuales semiestruturadas y sesiones de grupos focales. Los resultados detectaron el uso de metodologías de aula caracterizadas por una exposición y copias orales excesivas, apenas compatibles con las aspiraciones de los adolescentes de lograr autonomía y un papel protagonista. Las relaciones impersonales de los profesores con sus alumnos y la dificultad para abordar los conflictos en el aula contribuyen a la aparición y el agravamiento de episodios de violencia e indisciplina. Las propuestas de cambios en la formación docente se basan en ese análisis.

Palabras clave: *Violencia escolar. Indisciplina. Adolescentes. Educación Secundaria Inferior. Educación del docente.*

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