"HENRI COANDA"
AIR FORCE ACADEMY
ROMANIA

"GENERAL M.R. STEFANIK"
ARMED FORCES ACADEMY
SLOVAK REPUBLIC

THE EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

THE PARENT-STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP

Roxana Viorica MAIER

Universitatea de Vest „Vasile Goldiş" din Arad, Arad, România

Abstract: The present study has its roots in the desire to find solutions for a better teacher-student-parent relationship. When we bring the subject of education into discussion, we find ourselves in a potential space, the one of our development and of our all possibilities to fully round our inner selves. This space develops and increases through the mediation of the meeting we all have, as students, with the one being our teacher. But this world, this space is not complete if the process of our completion as individuals is not attended by our parents, involved in an educational partnership relation. Thus, the child-parent-teacher team traverses phase after phase, building a relationship within which the child manages to develop and complete his inner self. The present study brings forward issues which are quite common during puberty and adolescence – increased aggressiveness and faulty relationships. The objectives of the present study are to reduce the level of aggressiveness at a class level, as well as between students and teachers, and to attract parents into being educational partners alongside their children's teachers. The sample used for the research was formed by a class of eight graders and their parents, observed during an intervention done at the level of both groups.

Keywords: education, educational partnership, student, parent

THE TEXT OF THE PAPER

In a broad meaning "any type of education derives from an implicit or explicit conception about the child, his psychology and about learning methods" [1]. (Radu, 2001, page 317). In a narrow meaning, education means a magical encounter lasting for several years, with the potential space of our development and with the one being the modeller of this space- the teacher. Seen from this point of view, the teacher is a being who wants to transmit, who has knowledge to share, who insists in seeing beyond appearances and what the student decides to show at a given moment. Precisely because of this, the teacher has such a huge responsibility and his aim is so high and difficult to attain. The kindergarten and the schooling years are a period of discovery, first of the exterior, physical reality, then of the human one and finally of the student's own reality. This endeavour is facilitated by an authentic

communication and individual understanding of the real meaning of development and growth, all these having their basis in the student-teacher relationship. The child passes from an imaginary world ("we are playing mother and father, at the doctor's, at school, etc.") into the actual reality, he begins to understand its way of functioning and the rules which have to be obeyed; he starts learning how to adjust to various difficulties and how to replace fictional and strictly subjective attitudes with others, which are objective and realistic. On this route, the child will be supported by his/her parents, teachers and the peer groups – each having a different share of influence, in accordance with the child's age.

These sequences of personal growth are rounded through education and through interaction with others. On the temporal axis of our development, most of this process unfolds having as a central space the family, closely seconded by school, where we spend on an average ten, twelve or even seventeen years. "The child builds his own image by reference to others, through the mirroring and assigning effect, followed by the awareness and understanding that certain traits, attitudes and values are of his own. The interiorised and personalised information is used to understand and assimilate his own identity as a result of the reactions which other people have towards him" [2]. (Mitrofan, 2004, page 32).

The development of each person from childhood to adulthood passes through the educational system as a training institution. The teacher has the responsibility to guide the student on a route that is at the same time suitable and progressive for him/her. Thus, the teacher's great task is to discover what is suitable for the student.

As a teacher, one is responsible for assisting the student and in his/her turn, the student is responsible for the way in which he/she walks along the shown route, where he discovers, seeks and finds what he needs. But nowadays, this route is passed in high speed, with almost absent parents, with dedicated and enthusiastic teachers or on the contrary with engrossed or even sad educators, living without paying attention to emotions, without accessing them and without having a genuine communicative act. Thus, it is even more important for education to regain its real sense of determining the growth, development and formation of valuable individuals. Thus, it is of utmost importance for the parent to be asked to make a team with the teacher for the child's sake. Everything starts from simple habits of a healthy lifestyle, which gradually turn into growth, development and wise choices for a life as fulfilled as possible, when the child turns into a fully grown individual.

Puberty and adolescence are difficult periods into our development. According to Zlate the teenager faces a series of new needs or the needs described in the previous periods undergo an important change: the need to know, to be affectionate, to belong to a certain group, to be independent and the need to have models to look up to. The need to know is present starting with the early school age; this is joined during puberty by the need to create which turns during adolescence in the need to create with a social value. The kindergarten and primary school pupil's need to imitate turns into the desire to be unique during the first phases of adolescence, followed by the teenager's need to express himself/herself as a personality [3]. (Zlate, 1994, page 158).

The present study makes reference to the 13-14 year old age group and its issues-unequal development between boys and girls, increased aggressiveness, increased personal vulnerability, self-image formation, etc. and all the situations triggered by these issues-learning, relationship, communication difficulties, good or less fortunate decisions.

The research was approached by taking into consideration two dimensions:

- Of building a secure space in a class of students overwhelmed by aggressiveness; of decreasing the class' level of aggressiveness and of improving the relationship that the students had with their teachers.
- Of attracting parents as educational partners through parenting activities.

The expected results of the present research are the genuine expression of feelings, difficulties, of the relating methods at a group level and of wishes to change; all of them being doubled by socializing at a class level and by the parents' involvement in the whole process.

"HENRI COANDA"
AIR FORCE ACADEMY
ROMANIA

"GENERAL M.R. STEFANIK"
ARMED FORCES ACADEMY
SLOVAK REPUBLIC

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE of SCIENTIFIC PAPER
AFASES 2014
Brasov, 22-24 May 2014

Objectives:
- Identification of start indices in order to construct and reconstruct the class reality (with reference made to the children's reality doubled by the teachers' reality).
- Highlighting the aspects that can be improved, as well as the indices that need to be kept under observation in order to make the change (decrease of the aggressiveness level, a better relationship with the class teachers, and a better relationship with the classmates).
- Attracting parents in establishing a closer relationship with the school.

The hypotheses of the study:
- The class' aggressiveness level decreases as a result of the intervention
- The dimensions of the class relationships are changed after the personal development classes (through relationship we understand the teachers-students relation and the students-students relation)
- There are important differences in the class relationships after the parents' involvement in parenting activities.

Sample Description
- The sample of the present study consisted of a class of eight graders from an elementary school located in the capital city and their parents.

Research Tools
- The tools used during the study were provocative tools used in personal development and a questionnaire which targeted the personal expectations deriving from the research meetings.

Results and Discussions

The first part of the research had two phases: the first phase consisted in administering a questionnaire to parents and the second phase consisted in the initial assessment of the group. The questionnaire that was applied to the parents targeted a few of the child's interests and also the parents' expectations from the meetings that I was going to have with the class. The initial assessment of the class revealed the following malfunctions:
- increased aggressiveness
- dysfunctional relationships among students and between students and their teachers
- absenteeism
- non-participation in group activities (in general, not in those that were conducted by me)
- faulty communication- difficulties in following the rules of the group, difficulties in expressing their real thoughts (the students refused to express their opinion on various problems of their class, even when they were told that their written answers were to be kept anonymous)
- low levels of responsibility

The questionnaire administered to the parents highlighted through its results that these had great difficulties in believing into a positive change and that their expectations were scarce.

"By communicating with others the child manages to get a distance from the actual reality, and his experience enriches gradually, as his rapports with reality are increasing in number (…). As the child's communication processes are developing and are becoming more and more complex, in all their components, there arouses the possibility to describe and analyse the surrounding reality" [4]. (Golu, Ioniță, 2009, page 18).

The exercises proposed for the following phases of the research allowed the children to explore the space of their own image and of the role which each had within the class, as well as to discover their personal resources. A few examples of the exercises used during the research, include: "I am you"- the exercise targets the student's ability to focus on details, the ability to reproduce a message as exact as possible, the ability to select those messages which are relevant for his/her own description; "My qualities and I"- the exercise targets the student's ability to connect with his/her own qualities, the ability to make the difference between his/her own image and the one reflected by the others, the differentiation capacity when choosing the qualities that represent him/her; "The Squigle" drawing exercise which targets the students' ability to understand the difficulty of establishing a relationship in the absence of words, the student's ability to decipher a message with the help of a drawing; whether or not there is a difficulty in letting yourself being led by somebody else's message; "Modelling the Group" – the exercise targets the students' ability to model their class and to discover the elements that make it a functional or a dysfunctional one, as well as their ability to choose the change that would be the most suitable for them, for the given moment; "The Labels"- the exercise targets how labels are build up, their number, which of them are more adherent than the others and ways to remove them.

The results obtained during the present research were mostly related with the group's dynamics- a better communication among students, the boys tried and even succeeded in being less verbally aggressive and the ones who were considered as being "the bullies" of the class managed to behave differently. After the first progress at a class level and after certain students' and the whole class' accountability on several tasks (and not only on tasks but also on carrying out the task and the change), it was observed a first change in the class image at the level of the relationship with the teachers- after meeting the students for three times, the first progress was highlighted by the class teachers.

The next step was to give this change a permanent aspect. This step was only partially carried out because after eight weeks of meetings with the class, the parents decided to interrupt this endeavour temporarily.

An aspect that frequently appeared in all students' "stories" was the time spent with their parents- the results point out the amount of time they spend with their "nanny" or even by themselves. Another aspect which was noted by the students themselves was that they lacked "self-control", "common sense", "desire to change" and "responsibility". Having these results, those from the questionnaire administrated to the students (which had the same questions as the ones addressed to the parents and thus, the comparison of the given answers pointed out how well the parents knew their own children), as well as the results from the exercises applied during the meetings, the class tutor and I convened the parents for a meeting. After the analysis of the questionnaires and the results obtained during the exercises done with the whole class, parenting meetings were proposed. The topics addressed were: understanding the specific features of early adolescence and the difficulties that might arise due to this process, positive discipline "what fixed tasks does your child have at home", "which are the family rituals and which is their purpose", "which is your child's role within your family", "what does quality time mean", etc.

The class meetings led to an improvement into the class' behaviour, to a better group dynamics, to more productive communication and to a partial improvement of the students' academic results. The meetings with the parents led to a better communication between these and their children, to a better relationship with the school and to the parents' involvement in their children's activities.

"Any authentic educational process is committed in the perspective of a spiritual meeting between people and it implies a certain dynamics, a succession of quests and findings of two beings who have a surplus or a request, who have something to give or to receive [5]. (Cucoş, 2008, page 15). Thus, I am convinced that within this educational

"HENRI COANDA"
AIR FORCE ACADEMY
ROMANIA

"GENERAL M.R. STEFANIK"
ARMED FORCES ACADEMY
SLOVAK REPUBLIC

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE of SCIENTIFIC PAPER
AFASES 2014
Brasov, 22-24 May 2014

system, which seems to have lost its meaning, one can still identify the desire of certain teachers to offer answers to those who seek them and to attract as many educational partners as possible, in order to round their students' education and training.

CONCLUSIONS & ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The parents' involvement as educational partners has led to significant improvements in the students' behaviour at both class and school level. Starting from a situation, in which the parents and the teachers were present side by side into the students' life only during the parents' meetings, we have managed to involve the parents into their children's school life. This resulted into a series of common extra-curricular activities unfolded both within and outside the school perimeter. Within this space, especially created for education, the target is on gradual growth, development and discovery of the abilities, resources and strategies through which the student becomes a complete adult and the teacher ascertains that the chosen occupation is in fact a calling, a completion done as each generation passes by. This process is more efficient if the parent succeeds in following it continuously. It is precisely for this reason that my research on creating abilities for the students and their parents targeted the making of parent-student-teacher educational partnership.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study started from the premise that the student-parent-teacher team has a greater efficiency than the student-teacher team. Thus, the first limitations of our study appeared- the parents' availability to work and their time in general is limited and because of these aspects their presence at the proposed activities was most of times insufficient. Because of the absence of some parents or to be more precise, due to their sporadic presence the results and the pursued objectives lacked a certain consistency. However, I believe that the greatest shortcoming of the class activity was the limited presence. Although, the results were positive and they were recorded quite fast, thus showing the students' and their parents' availability to work, change in a certain environment is not enough. What counts more is to give this change a permanent character. If we consider that the intervention usually has three levels: the strategic one (which targets the correct choice of the goal), the tactic one (which implies the correct choice of the method needed to solve the problem) and the internalization of the change, we may state that in the case of the present study, the class activities covered only the first two levels.

REFERENCES

1. Radu, N. et al *The psychology of education*, Bucharest, *România de Mâine* Foundation Publishing House, (2001), pg. 317
2. Mitrofan, L. *Basic Information on Social Psychology*, Sper Publishing House, (2004), pg.32
3. Zlate, M. *Introduction in Psychology*, Şansa Publishing House, Bucharest, (1994), pg 158
4. Golu, F., Ioniță, C. *Practical Applications of Child's Psychology, personal development as an alternative education programme*, Sper Publishing House, (2009), pg. 18
5. Cucoş C., *Education-love, edification, completion*, Polirom Publishing House, Iasi, (2008), pg. 15