

School Violence and Violence in School: A proposal for a Teacher Training Curriculum

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Abstract In the first part of this study we examine the school violence question, be it the violence that happens at school, consequence of external pressures (cultural, social, familiar) or the violence that happens from the organizational structures of that same school (institutional violence), and is then reflected in all those that are involved in the school. Nevertheless, since the frequency of school violence does not tend to disappear in our future, it is imperative that teachers-in-training are prepared in advance to deal with various levels of violence; in order to achieve this goal, a specific subject was created - Violence in school: educating to intervene, intervening so as to prevent for teachers-in-training of Infant and Primary School. This article describes in its second part the creation of a curriculum for preventing school violence developed by some teachers of the University of Aveiro's Educational Department (Portugal) in the European Project NOVAS RES ambit. We believe that this curriculum can also inspire some other institutions to provide teachers-in-training with the necessary tools to deal with violence in their professional future.

Keywords Violence, School, Intervention/Prevention School Violence, Curriculum, Student Teachers

1. Introduction

As happens in all society, violence, in all its manifestations[1], is also present in school. Teachers suffer aggressions from their pupils; these in turn suffer aggressions from their schoolmates, and not often from teachers as well[2]. School members are exposed both to aggressions, although in different forms, and to coercions from the school institution. It's not easy to become a teacher these days[3],[4],[5].

Recently, significant research has been focused on identifying emerging challenges, recent policy innovation, practices, and areas for action with an emphasis on the various forms of violence that children experience in schools such as bullying, cyberbullying[6], aggression and indiscipline[20],[35] in the educational system related with age[7], gender[8],[9],[53], culture, ethnicity and social class. On the other hand, a review of literature on this subject point out as important areas to carry out further research on international and cross-country comparative research as a way to facilitate policy creation surrounding school violence in specific countries, as in Israel[1]. This kind of research, can also give a substantial contribute to theories of school violence[10]; to change the scopus from individual characteristics of victims and bullies to an understanding of how contexts, both within and outside school, impact on school violence

[10],[11],[12],[13]; to develop a deeper theoretical understanding of factors such as minority status, ethnic and cultural affiliation which are correlated within a given society with poverty, education, deprivation and oppression.

On the other hand, the foundation of the International Observatory on Violence in Schools enables to share outcomes of relevant research, to benefit from international scientific comparison on violence in schools[14].

The prevention and intervention actions for this kind of violent behaviour required initiatives to reduce violence in schools[15] which aimed at improving preventative factors such as promoting a good school climate (e.g. Iceland; the Netherlands and Norway); security approaches (e.g. Safe Schools Programme in Portugal); encouraging a sense of student responsibility (e.g. Austria and the Netherlands); organising specific teacher training to deal with violence (e.g. Ireland and Spain).

Alongside these activities, schools worldwide felt the urge to develop specific anti-violent programmes (e.g. RESOLVE Project Alberta; Capturing Kids' Hearts & Teen Leadership; School Violence Prevention Demonstrating Program; Effectiveness of Programs to Prevent School Bullying (Sweden); as well as guides (UNESCO), manuals (Doorways III: Teacher Training Manual, On School-Related Gender-Based Violence) and specific handbooks for teachers (Council of Europe, Violence Reduction in Schools –how to make a difference, A Handbook).

Commonly, the focus on this subject is concentrated on the students' level as well as teachers', but it hardly refers to the type of violence that is produced in that same school[16],[10].

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Published online at <http://journal.sapub.org/edu>

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However, the violence that the school and the teachers can exert on students can produce in these same students mechanisms of resistance[17],[18]. This way, violence works like a spiral with repercussions not only at the behaviours, but also at the learning level since violence can also be learned.

Therefore it is vital that the symptoms, the victims, the aggressors and the spectators, as well as the places in which it happens more frequently, are known[19],[33]. It is also important to analyse and understand its functioning mechanisms and underlying logic and to develop a group of strategies that may enable to intervene positively in violent situations[20].

Besides the relevancy of the international context research about school violence demonstrated so far, a group of teachers from the University of Aveiro (Portugal) felt the urge to answer to the needs, interests and motivations that teachers-in-training manifested concerning school violence. Since violence will not disappear from schools, although it may decrease, they feel that there is always something schools can effectively do.

It becomes, therefore, necessary to go ahead with the deconstruction of some prejudices in which our action is rooted, specially the belief that violence is a problem that comes from society alone. Adding to this, the fact that our behaviour is conducted by (stereotyped) assumptions, led the teachers to believe that a greater conscience about this question was needed as a guiding system towards the action of the group of teachers-in-training, through the implementation of a set of alternative strategies so it can effectively contribute to reduce the problem as it rises today in our schools.

Considering the above mentioned, it appears to be imperative, then, the necessity to develop a curriculum for teachers-in-training as a way of instructing them how to deal with school violence.

2. The Concept of Violence: From Uncertainty to an Attempted Definition

Violence is a term we often use with many different meanings and in different contexts (economic, political, social and individual) with different amplitudes, intensities or subjectivities. For instance, what is for me a motive of violence may not be so to someone else; and, as such, how do we draw the line between what we can or not consider violence? And when does a certain type of strength turn into violence? How to measure the excess or the abuse of strength?

Therefore, the polysemic, subjective, complex and ambiguous nature of the concept of violence should be taken into account each time violence is referred to since not every definition of the concept that is known to us will include the same degree of complexity.

On the other hand, violence is also characterised by an inherent intricacy once it can be explained by individual, pathological, and behavioural factors, besides familiar and social ones, and also by the interaction of each of these factors.

Usually, this concept is associated to strength (Latin: vis); but we need to know to what type of force[21] or strength we are referring to. Conversely, this kind of violence does not include verbal aggression such as rumour spreading or social and ethnic exclusion. The World Health Organisation defines "violence" as "the intentional use of physical and psychological force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation" ([22]: 4).

For the time being, we shall adopt one definition in particular, which will be used throughout our study; this definition was created by the NOVA RES Project in which we were partners: "violence is aggressive behaviour, that may be physically, sexually or emotionally abusive. The aggressive behaviour is conducted by an individual or group against another, or others. Physically abusive is when a child, adolescent or group directly or indirectly ill treats, injures or kills another or others. The aggressive behaviour can involve pushing, shoving, shaking, punching, kicking, squeezing, burning or any other form of physical assault on a person or on a property. Emotionally abusive behaviour is where there are verbal attacks, threats, taunts, yelling, exclusion and malicious rumours. Sexually abusive behaviour is where there is sexual assault or rape" ([18]: 9).

3. Violence at school – Bullying

The first studies about bullying were carried out by Olweus[23],[24] and were concentrated on the theoretical reasons of the phenomenon, both in the description of the school reality and its necessary intervention.

According to more recent studies[25],[26],[27],[28], we can define bullying as an intentional action which is unchained by an individual, or a group of individuals that decided to attack unjustly the other, for prolonged spaces in time, and in so doing, exerting a psychological intimidation on them, with a regular and frequent character. Examples of bullying are pushing, blackmailing, insulting, telling scary stories, violent freshmen receptions and excluding or rejecting addressing them with threats, and resorting to the use of corporal aggression[29], but also verbal threats in order to, for example, extort money.

The social isolation of the victims is something that is looked for, because it is also a way of making sure that nobody will interfere in this process, and in so doing the phenomenon leaves the victim an unsurpassable fear of even mentioning the fact to someone else.

This action usually falls on children which have a greater difficulty in defending themselves while alone, and which

turns something like going to school into a real drama that can affect their school outcomes.

These are children who usually lack social cooperation skills or social and relational abilities; they have difficulties in concentrating in schoolwork; they feel sick and unwilling after having being violently attacked; they are anxious and insecure and they have difficulty in falling asleep as a result of suffering bullying from peers[25],[26],[63].

The aggressors, on the other hand, present exactly the opposite characteristics of their victims: they are confident and certain of themselves, they are not afraid[30] they are usually popular among the others peers, but they are prone to an aggressive stance which is usually a result of family hostility and permissiveness[58] where aggression is something accepted and reinforced, and therefore they will hardly regret their behaviour.

Since this type of behaviour frequently happens during school breaks in the playground[29] or out of school and very often occurs on the way home to school, this makes it difficult for the child to tell the teacher exactly what happened. Moreover, quite often teachers tend to undervalue or depreciate the issue since they tend to believe that the children's complaints on school violence do not result from actual violent behaviours, but rather from the children's imagination[31],[32].

3.1. (In)Discipline¹ in the Classroom

Taking into account that neither bullying nor indiscipline is violence, they can however trigger violent actions.

Nonetheless, many situations of indiscipline that occur more frequently in the classroom may be misinterpreted with bullying; aggression between equals and those incidents of "disruptive" nature whose "disturbance" affects the "good classroom functioning"[35],[36] and it is these situations that teachers most worry about, and end up suffering of stress and also feel dissatisfaction for their students[4],[55],[56].

It should also be mentioned that aggressiveness is but a dimension of indiscipline and the respect for the single person that is the student should be taken into account when it comes to making decisions and negotiating about school rules and functioning modes, in order to make it easier for the student to obey and accept rules. Creating a school climate[37],[38],[39],[40] that provides its students with an experience of real democratic values will in turn allow them to develop a set of social and relational competences of pacific sociability and of resolution and negotiation of conflicts when faced, for example, with other's opinions, however divergent they may be from their own[41],[42].

This is what Apple and Beane[43] talk about in Democratic Schools of deweyan inspiration according to which the democratic way of life is learned through the learning by

doing and where we can find described various experiences of four American schools that implemented successfully democratic educational practices.

These are, however, not role model schools, but each one has as basic assumptions the following: they feel tied to anti-racist and anti-sexist principles, the educational practices result from a negotiated curriculum and an involvement which is extended to both students and community, as well as flexible forms of evaluation.

In spite of all the difficulties and obstacles that they had to face and overcome the implementation of these democratic schools, they are fundamentally characterised by "encouraging young people to critically analyse happenings and problems and making it possible to question that which is considered as dominant interpretations (teachings)" ([43]: 44).

Therefore, studying spaces, and critical readings of social problems, cooperative learning as a fundamental way of democratic life, the involvement of young people in the planning of their curriculum as well as a thorough effort to deal with the cultural diversity and lessen the different conditions related to the different cultures, are all privileged.

Yet we are well aware of the difficulties that all this brings about, because like Perrenoud & Thurler ([44]: 53), we also believe that "organizing a school like a democratic city is not a magical trick, but demands sociologic imagination and social, pedagogical and didactic engineering in order for its formulation to be possible, and so that its daily experience be both favourable to citizen learning compatible with the other school tasks".

3.2. Aggressiveness in the Playground and in the Corridors

As was referred to earlier on, aggressiveness is not a synonym of violence. In effect, a degree of aggressiveness is needed in the life of any human being, both in relation to his/her development as a person, and in relation to his/her capacity of responding when facing the challenges of the surrounding environment (basic survival).

Nevertheless, if aggressiveness is natural to man, this does not mean that violence is too. In fact, according to Sanmartin ([45]: 19), "*the aggressive one is born, and the violent one makes himself up*". In other words; although biology makes us aggressive, it is culture that turns us into pacific or violent beings. Culture has, then, a fundamental role in the configuration of the human being for the better or for the worse.

Thus, when aggressiveness assumes an intentional injurious behaviour for the other, and becomes violence, such is also the result of a cultural evolution.

By recognising that there are some dimensions of our culture that render favourable such violent behaviour[65] we have to change those aspects of our culture that, in interaction with our biology, induce such actions.

It is precisely in this context that we find that our school can intervene, by changing the course of each one's history by proposing an alternative culture of non-violence.

In Bandura's[47] understanding, aggressiveness is related

¹ "Disruptive school behaviour" was the term recently adopted to designate undisciplined individuals who negatively separate themselves while facing "school rules, damaging the learning environment, the learning conditions or the empathy of the people in the schools". The multidimensional structure of the school disruption also includes, "aggression, lack of attention and the violation of rules" ([34]: 21).

to the social learning model. According to this theory, aggressive behaviour is socially learned, and a number of factors contribute to it such as family, school and television, whose models are reproduced by those who were exposed for a longer period to them as we shall refer to later on.

In a study about violence² in three primary schools in the municipality of Aveiro conducted by us as researchers of the University of Aveiro, and whose main objective consisted in gathering statements of children's voices about the manifestations of school violence in the different school spaces (classrooms, corridors and playgrounds), it was stated that, given the transitory character that the corridor assumes in relation to the classroom and the playground, many situations of violence happened immediately outside the classroom: "they start hitting us in the corridors" (8 years old); "the boys are rough and don't leave us alone...and no they are not playing because I know when they play and when they really hit us..." (8 years old).

It was also verified that "*hitting*" (67.5%), "*the act of tripping*" (67%) and "*insulting*" (60%) were kept as the maximum values of violence that happened in the corridors, while "*speaking badly*" (62.5%) and "*insulting*" (57.5%) represented higher rates of violence in the playground in all of the schools, followed by physical aggression.

Authors came to the conclusion that most of these children like to play in the playground because it was when that they had an opportunity to do things that they could not do within the classroom. Also, the playground represents the period of the day when children can speak and make confidences to their peers. However, some children are confronted with the fact of being victims of aggressors that belonged "to our classroom, but it is also the older boys who hit us" (8 years old).

The reasons linked to violent behaviour perpetrated by the older boys when questioned, revealed the influence of a cultural image that had been transmitted to them by the patriarchal society: "it's good to hit like in the Digimon and Pokemon movies" (8 years old), where strength is associated to the masculine image.

Through this study, it was possible to see that the experience of violence in the school context became significant both when they assumed the role of aggressor and also that of the victim: the exis-

tence of an atmosphere of insecurity (mainly for the girls) did not allow them to resolve the problem directly, and this only increased the "conscience of strength" of the aggressor.

Yet they knew what to do in each case; for example, "thinking about not doing that anymore (hitting...); apologising; hugging each other; calling the teacher; separate the boys and make up (become friends again); only watching movies that are not violent; there should be more respect in the corridors".

The aggressors (mostly boys) shared a number of positive convictions about violence, something passed on to them by the violent culture of today's society; parents and teachers have then an important responsibility to carry out.

4. Some Important Causes of the School Violence

There are a number of individual factors that play an important role in the aggressive behaviour of some children and which need to be known and understood in order to be dealt with.

Indeed there are certain pathologies related to aggressiveness, for example, children with an attention disorder (attention deficit) and hyperactive children, or those that show a weak tolerance when faced with frustration, low self esteem, or a clinical report of depression and stress.

Sometimes it can simply be a difficult child. Other times, we are faced with children that are badly taken care of at home, with lack of affection and care, and these do no more than represent the familiar models of aggressive behaviour. We are talking about dysfunctional families (drug addiction, alcohol, drinking problems, poverty, delinquency),[48] where aggressive behaviours can break out.

In these cases it was noticed that these children identify themselves with the masculine model, because children learn that culturally the father carries the social expectation to solve all sort of problems.

When this happens, the family – which should be a source of security, stability and affection very much needed for the development of a normal child – also transforms itself in violence, when its functioning role models of solving problems characterise themselves by being more punishing than having dialogue or negotiation. The family, then, paradoxically appears to be "the most violent institution of our society" in which the woman is often badly treated as a result of a patriarchal³ culture.

According to this study, it was possible to establish a very important factor related to gender, which showed the exaltation of the patriarchal culture and the aggressive models in the culture of our society, reported by the boys when ques-

² About 120 children aged between 7 and 10 and belonging to classes considered as problematic and in which acts of violence were registered (such as bodily offences in and out of the classroom, insults and small acts of stealing) were questioned. With the help of this study, we tried to get to know and understand how the violence was not only defined, but also lived by these children, but also to investigate the nature of the explicative reasons that they attributed to the phenomenon. In order for this to happen, the following methodology was used: semi-structured interviews (students and teachers) and questionnaire (teachers-in-training), and the following variables were considered: sex, age, social background, school spaces (classroom, corridors, playgrounds, and gymnasiums). The places of study chosen by us were the classroom and the gymnasium because it was in these that a greater number of violent actions took place. Besides this, the choice of schools was based on the following criteria: 1) belonging both to the urban and rural zone, in order to estimate the importance of each one of these vectors on a behavioural level; 2) the existence of a significant number of children that registered some school experience and that could reflect a greater adequacy as to the comprehension of the reality in which they were inserted.

³ About this Sanmartin [45] expresses a series of myths about the family, which are prone to change in our days, as a result of more information about violence and also because of the female emancipation, not only economical, financial, but also cultural, being more and more able to accuse or denounce violence cases. The myths are: 1) a domestic violence is relatively diminutive; 2) a domestic violence is a result of psychiatric problems; 3) only in less fortunate classes is there violence.

tioned about the reasons for their behaviour. As matter of fact, the boys identified strength with reason, as a result of the television[49],[50],[54], cinema and video game supremacy,[46],[51],[52], which, in turn, certainly influenced these same boys, especially when they find themselves in front of others alone, exposed and unprotected⁴ children.

In contrast, the girls practised violence in a subtle and indirect way[53] turning to exclusion, marginalization or silence.

Given the huge amount of violent images that children see every day, it is easy to understand that they consider normal to kill and shoot as a means to solving their conflicts and problems, and that those that have the strength are those who are right. According to this logic, children are developing a certain insensitiveness to the others' pain and putting themselves into another level of reality which is far from the affections, and where "everything can be done" because all this is virtual.

In fact, just like K. Popper states, "children while using from the diversion that television is, have a great difficulty in distinguishing reality from fiction mainly because their understanding of the world is very limited" ([54]: 37).

Further, we still see various images that show sexist attitudes, and that in no way dignify the woman and therefore contribute to a bigger crystallization of stereotypes and social prejudices[1].

In this sense it is possible to state that television also favours the subliminal learning of violence that the child then transposes into the school atmosphere and in which the "very contents of each programme and publicity spot deeply influences the attitudes, beliefs and actions of the children"([54]: 40).

It is then urgent that parents and teachers together know how to critically reflect and discuss with their children television programmes and what values they want to transmit, and not dismiss themselves from their fundamental role as educators.

The results from what we have explained are that the explanation for violent behaviour does not depend alone from one variable but from a group of variables that in intersection justify some of its complexity, facts that the school should be aware of if it wants to intervene with quality in the life and education of this society's citizens.

⁴ Another side of the discussion about violence is that which tries to determine the degree of influence of the media in the induction of violent behaviour for those who are on the outer side watching. Even though we share the idea that the media are not the only responsible ones for the growth of child and youth violence, we do however attribute on them some responsibility above all when "living in a home in which you can see or suffer mistreats, in which there is alcohol or drugs, when there are bad relations between parents or between parents and children, in a home in which the economic, psychological and social factors are not equal to those of a normal family, when you live in excessively small homes, or homes with no conditions at all and have no family support or support from any friends, these are circumstances in which television can increase or develop beliefs, attitudes and violent behaviours that are already existing" ([54]: 108). Another interesting analysis about this question of violence is its relation with democracy, enunciated by Popper [54] in *Television: a danger for democracy* for whom the refusal of television makes up the essence of democracy.

5. The Violence of School

From what was analysed until now, we can state that the school is like a stage of violent manifestations of a distinct, but somewhat complex nature (violence, *bullying*, indiscipline, aggressiveness). This happens due to many explicative factors (from individual to family to social ones); it happens in specific different places (classroom, corridors, playgrounds, stairs); it involves different agents (victims, aggressors, observers), and it is exerted on various levels (among peers, from children to teachers, and to the system).

But if this form of school violence that we were referring to till now has been object of some more intense debate and research, the same cannot relatively be said about what concerns the violence of the school[14].

When it comes to the teachers, the level of *stress* and dissatisfaction felt[55],[56] because of the educational innovations that they are always subject to, (school violence, multiculturalism, citizenship, indiscipline...), but for which they are not prepared, ends up in attitudes of resistance to change. Further, the bureaucratic weight of the school as institution and the lack of communication, or the difficulty in communicating with the student's parents represent a strong level of stress that teachers have to deal with. It was noticed very often that the school can become violent in its action when it forbids students of doing activities they enjoy or, even worst, school can become violent when, without noticing it, school teaches violence ([57]: 152) by effectively practising it through its functioning and organisation, through its contents that seem that are aimed at producing school failure. According to Perrenoud & Thurler[44], it is the very school that manufactures intentionally the production mechanisms of school failure. Indeed, the assessment is an example of this, as a regulating practice of school organisation, and being this practice subject to various underlying criteria of institutional excellence that are arbitrarily defined. These rules concern the decisions for the management of the classroom, the selection and school improvement. Therefore, when the school assesses through the standardized tests, it fosters injustices since this kind of assessment is based on rules that are arbitrarily created by the school institution itself and do not take into account the actual social, cultural and linguistic asymmetries that characterize the student population. Further, the paradox seems to increase when, after all that has been said about evaluation through standardized testing, the school intends to continue teaching and does not seem to grasp why it is not able to do so with success[57].

5.1. "Symbolic Violence"

School is violent because it produces in part its own school failure. Let us see: language and school culture are normally very far from familiar language[58],[64] and culture, from reading and interpretation codes of the world and from reality.

Thus, there is a certain type of language, knowledge and learning, that is excluded a priori and whose knowledge falls

on excellence choices that are merely arbitrary. This way, school excludes and marginalizes a future citizen, something which is paradoxical, especially when it speaks of democracy[44] in which the cognitive inconsistency between saying and doing is accentuated. It is in this sense that Perrenoud and others[59] consider that the curriculum constitutes a source of violence for the students when it accentuates its selective effects. Very often we see that the school also exerts other forms of violence when it puts together children of the same age in the same class, and by doing so assumes beforehand that all the children are in the same conditions as to their acquired academic knowledge, and transforming the cultural inheritance in inequality of school success, or even when it puts together children according to their parents academic level.

It so happens, as we very well know, that not all of these children had the same opportunities of learning which means that some may have a more difficult school course, and will have a greater number of obstacles to outperform.

On the other hand, traces of violence were registered in the teacher that shields himself/herself in the list of verbs to copy, in the long copies (transcripts), in the games that encourage an excessive competition, and leading to discrimination, and mockery between equals, to ridiculing and even insults, or even more, when they dismiss themselves from the alleged interest that they should manifest for their students when these become difficult problems, nearly insoluble, and therefore dooming them to disdain and abandon.

Violence manifests itself in the classroom when the class environment is tense and ruled by a certain authoritarianism, and other inadequate behaviour, or when the student rights are not respected, sometimes through prohibitions and heavy or out of proportion punishment; or even when it pretends to make the assessment of knowledge and complex objective and quantitative learning.

The crisis of values that is reflected on school institution is manifest in the difficulty students have in accepting rules, values and regulations, as well as the still scarce and inadequate attention paid by the school to the ethnical, cultural, religious or sexual minorities; the interpersonal relation between teachers and students which are perceptibly vertical which in turn only make communication more difficult; when lack of respect and solidarity is shown and when constant aggressions are noted; the little sensibility towards the relational and affective behaviour, and the use of routinely and traditional methodology are other factors that are pointed out as having a great influence in the enhancement of the appearance of violence.

Being certain that violence is something that is learned, and that it is also taught by the school itself as we have been showing, we consider that the school should try an exercise of a more critical reflection about its speeches and practices and analyse the pressure that structural violence exerts on all, trying to accomplish a more critical and intervenient role in the life of each student.

Violence in school demands a different approach from what is usual and that is characterised by the fact that it is

systemic and ecologic-communicative, interdisciplinary and integral. It is an approach that contemplates the whole of the human being that occupies himself with the knowledge, feelings, values and attitudes, physical and psychic aspects of the affective and rational; that acquires culture, the liberty of ideas, reason, critical thinking, democratic values, solidarity, social justice and non violent resolution of conflicts, the acceptance of diversity (cultural, ethnical, religious, sexual orientation...), a total new pedagogical model for a school that aims at inclusion and not exclusion.

Besides the strategies before mentioned, others can also be developed in a wider perspective in time, aimed at the exploration of the theme in a diverse way, be it through videos, CD-ROM's, and also through flyers and an internet site where the interactivity and the exchange of information in the created forum is privileged.

It is, therefore, indispensable that the teacher training of teachers-in-training contemplates a school violence problem prevention curriculum through the democratic management; regarding the school as a democratic way of living space into perspective, of team work, as we have mentioned before.

Further, considering that the problem of violence is but one of the levels of school life, it is no wonder that violence influences and is influenced by other dimensions, and as far as it is known, in the resolution of the problem all of the other interveners should be taken into account, not only the victims and the aggressors, but the spectators of violence, school atmosphere, family and society.

6. The Teacher Training and School Violence - curriculum

The creation of the curriculum on school violence for teachers-in-training started with discussions between teachers -researchers of the University of Aveiro's, Education Department (Portugal) in the European Project NOVAS RES (1999/2001) ambit.

This project had as primordial objective the study and analysis of the set of problems raised by violence in some local and national specific educational contexts, as well as to present some measures of prevention for this problem they could use.

Teachers were concerned over the lack of preparation the teachers-in-training had in identifying the problem and further still in dealing with school violence.

When confronted with the lack of a teacher education program examining the different types of school violence and how the teacher can deal with these incidents[60] a search began for an existing curriculum for teacher education programs.

Since no such curriculum was found, teachers have decided to create one for students who belong to the Childhood Education and to the Primary School teachers degree having in consideration their specific needs and worries previously reported in several sessions.

These were students of Primary School Degree (4th year

students) at the time in their last graduation year having direct contact with school reality (Practical Pedagogics); the other ones where 3rd year students of Childhood Education (Ethics and Education for Citizenship) only having occasional direct contact with children.

In what concerns their participation and involvement, in a total of 18, the fundamental objective of the intervention consisted in the sensitisation and consciousness of the phenomenon of violence, and the acquisition of competences for positive resolution and intervention when faced with school violent situations in response to their main concerns stated above.

To attend this goal, alongside a revision of literature that was initially conducted, students were asked in the first two class sessions to establish their needs as well as to state their knowledge of school related violence and their specific concerns in their future classrooms. The majority of teachers-in-training within their traineeship declared to be very worried about the possibility of having to deal with classroom violence in the future, without knowing the fundamental steps they could take for prevention and appropriate response.

One specific intervention of educational innovation revealed itself indispensable, mainly at the teacher training level, and so being able to form in order to intervene, and intervene in order to prevent. Thence, the curriculum proposed – Violence in school: educating to intervene, and intervening to prevent – through which it was attempted to contribute to the improvement of the quality of the educational action, facing the challenge of the improvement of the professional capacitation of these future teachers.

This way, the teachers-in-training received training according to a system of modules about Violence in school: educating to intervene and intervening to prevent.

In this specific classes students were asked to look at how they understand the phenomenon of school violence and were invited to make some suggestions concerning the kind of strategies and solutions they would come up with.

Very often students ended up to the conclusion that we were constantly faced with erroneous presuppositions about violence, about its recognition and also about the factors of resolution of violence in school.

Indeed, in spite of already existing some sensitisation towards the problem between teachers-in-training, a heavy tendency to undervalue and relativise was noted between them, as well as taking off from the wrong presupposition that the solution to the problem is outside school and that there is nothing school can do; therefore it is a problem that only society can solve.

During the class sessions it was also perceived that this attitude is accompanied by another in which the teachers-in-training usually are not motivated to solve these questions and end up suffering and feeling these problems alone. By not speaking about these problems of the relationship of the students with their peers they install a silence culture[63] which inevitably leads to a scarce intervention by the staff every time they come across situations of bullying in

the playground as the ones in the study, for example,[61],[62].

No wonder that it was noticed in the studies that it is the children who sometimes, if not always, have a great difficulty in telling the teachers to help them work out situations of violence when they are faced with them in the school grounds – mainly in the playground and in the corridors – thus preferring to talk about it with their peers[63].

Once students were aware enough about the phenomenon of violence in the school grounds and its true dimensions, another phase of deep understanding of its complexity was established in those classes, from philosophical, anthropological, sociological, psychological and pedagogical perspectives – that would allow breaking apart normal thinking patterns which are responsible for the transmission of a culture of violence and in which we are all inserted, in order to build a critical thought as an alternative proposal to the violence culture.

Nevertheless, the fundamental step could not be taken without going onto the next levels – those of diagnostic and assessment of the symptoms of school violence in its various forms (bullying, indiscipline, aggressiveness, conflict...) and intervention for prevention in the teacher training level.

However, the initial teacher-training module would have no meaning if some (necessary) measures of intervention and prevention of school violence had not been mentioned and discussed.

Therefore, and just like some studies[64],[29] point out, some axis of positive intervention at school are possible in order to reduce violence, such as: the school educational project; sensitisation and teacher training, parents and educational action assistants; after school free time; monitors in the playgrounds; guidance and accompanying (tutoring) of children be they victims or aggressors.

Besides these aspects some other positive strategies for intervention to help to minimize violence at school were mentioned and discussed, such as: 1) school regulation norms and values; 2) class representative assemblies; 3) pedagogical environment open to constructive discussion; 4) coherency of the school's speech and practise; 5) values which pass through the hidden curriculum; 6) all sort of extracurricular activities showing the importance of the school in NOT transmitting an idea of indifference in relation to situations of violence; 7) the use of specific curricular areas that are not disciplinary (e.g. Civic Education) to help to convey a positive understanding of human relationships and friendly and peaceful communication.

This module of educational intervention that we developed tried to fall upon a set of simple and accessible strategies within the range of any teacher who was minimally interested, motivated and observant to these questions.

Besides this, at the end of the semester, teachers-in-training, university teachers and cooperating teachers of the schools in which they were having direct contact with school reality, all attended the Seminar Violence in school, throwing the chairs out of the windows developed in the ambit of the European Project NOVAS RES – realized at the

University of Aveiro.

It should also be noted that the supervising cooperating teachers of the schools where the students realised their traineeship (mainly from primary schools) also benefited from the workshop taken on for the students, and also widened their circle of intervention at the level of educational practices.

The question in mind was to proceed towards a sensitisation for this problem by the diverse school actors (teachers, teachers-in-training, last year students of the educational degree, school workers, parents and students).

Some of the intervention areas of this anti-violence module that have had a number of modifications as a result of the sessions attended by the teachers-in-training and the university teachers are, for instance, the democratic management of companionship both in the classroom and in the school area, the cooperation in the achievement of the tasks and the respect for the other. The sessions' syllabus is as follows:

Curriculum

Teacher training module

Violence in school: educating to intervene, intervening to prevent

General Objectives:

To characterise the phenomenon of violence at the primary school level;

To recognise the phenomenon in its most diverse typologies and manifestations;

To understand the experience of the set of problems of violence in all of its agents and dimensions (victims, aggressors, school atmosphere, family, society)

To reflect about the fundamental importance of the prevention of situations of violence;

To develop competences in order to intervene positively when faced with violence

Programmatic Contents

The need for a conceptual clarification

1. Towards a definition of the concept of violence:
1.1. Violence and *Bullying* 1.2. Violence and Aggressiveness
1.3. Violence and Hyperactivity 1.4. Violence and indiscipline 1.5. Conflicts in the school context.

2. Characterisation of the school violence: 2.1. Victim forms 2.2. Places where violence occurs 2.3. Violence in the classroom 2.4. Violence in the corridors 2.5. Violence in the playgrounds 2.6. Aggressors and victims.

3. The contribution of explanatory factors of school violence 3.1. Individual factors 3.2. Familiar factors 3.3. Institutional and social factors.

4. Violence and the teacher training 4.1. Forms of intervention and prevention 4.2. Mentoring: Intervention in the playground 4.3. Intervention in the corridors 4.4. Intervention in the classroom 4.5. Other forms of prevention in extracurricular activities (sport, dance, theatre)

5. Violence, peer-mediation and social skills 5.1. Case studies

6. Violence and Philosophy 6.1. Violence and Power: the logic(s) subjacent to violence 6.2. Non-violence as an ethic-philosophical demand (Girard/Levinas) 6.3.

Non-violence action principles 6.4. The non-violent resolution of conflicts 6.5. The probabilities of a non-violent culture

7. Violence and Sociology 7.1. Social violence 7.2. The tolerated pathway 7.3. Anti-school violence 7.4. Vandalism 7.5. The consumption of substances

8. Violence and Psychology/Psychiatry 8.1. Emotional anaesthesia 8.2. From biology to culture 8.3. Drugs and brain

9. Violence and Anthropology 9.1. Violence territories 9.2. Amusement/entertainment violence, ritual violence 9.3. Reciprocity and survival

10. Other themes associated with violence 10.1. Violence and the *Mass Media* 10.2. Violence and multiculturalism 10.3. Violence and Gender 10.4. Violence and Entertainment (Games) 10.5. Violence and Crime

11. International perspectives and programmes of preventing school violence 11.1. Portugal; Spain; France; Ireland; England; Switzerland; Norway; Canada; The USA.

Bibliography

Besides the essential recommended bibliography, we think it is important to call your attention to the diversity of other existing instruments and materials that are at the disposition of whoever wants to truly acquaint oneself with all the thematic and trace action strategies. This way, a systematic survey was realised of internet sites, CD-ROMs, videos, films and pedagogical materials about this thematic.

7. Conclusions

We would like to make a final remark about the teacher training face to face with the intervention against school violence and its prevention to reduce it.

The permanent change that characterises school contexts demands a continuous and enduring training on behalf of the teachers who want to be heedful, to the reality that surrounds them, and in so doing will be able to answer to the new challenges of society and demands set by the students.

It is our strong belief that this curriculum can still provide teachers-in-training with the necessary tools to deal with violence in their professional future and therefore inspire other institutions to develop initiatives like this in order to help teachers not only to be more sensible towards these problems, but also to become more conscious and proactive in the field in order to contribute to a qualitative change in their lives and in those of their students.

This way, the teachers while intellectual agents of change, would no longer see themselves in attitudes of continuous resistance to innovation, would not withdraw themselves in the traditionally known methods, or in the victim's role or in the steadfast certainties, which would be totally wanting in meaning and so opening the path to the creation of change.

Seminar

Violence in school: throwing the chairs out of the windows

Objectives:

The principal objective of this Seminar is to analyse and

understand the phenomenon of school violence in its multiple dimensions and complexities and contexts of life.

Taking into account that the school is an important factor of change through its principle agents, it is also our objective to show some of the practical and pedagogical measures of educational intervention that are capable of contributing to the decrease of the observation of this phenomenon.

Public

This seminar is dedicated to the all of the students of the Primary School Licentiate Degree, and Childhood/ Infancy teachers; teachers and educational researchers as well.

Program

09h30 – Inscription / Enrolment and handing over of the folders

09h45 – Opening of the work / Moderator (Hermínia Pedro / DDTE. Univ. Aveiro)

10h10 - Towards a non-violence culture: Some philosophical reflections (Ana Pedro / Univ. Aveiro)

10h20 – Administering student indiscipline (Alexandre Ventura / Univ. Aveiro)

10h40 – Violence in the schools – a sociological look (Neto Mendes / Univ. Aveiro)

11h00 – Coffee break

11h30 – Violence and Anthropology (Jacques Houart / Univ. Coimbra)

12h15 - Debate

13h00 - Lunch

14h00 – Reports/Commentaries of violence in the school context

15h00 – Commentaries (Fátima Lemos – Psychiatrist)

15h45 – Coffee break

16h00 – “Throwing the chairs out of the windows”

17h30 – Conclusion and end of the seminar

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