



Peaceful coexistence in school as an imperative of current education: proposals and perspectives.

Peaceful coexistence at school as an imperative of current education: proposals and perspectives.

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Ana Cecilia Valencia Aguirre

Department of Philosophy. University of Guadalajara (MEXICO)

CE: anaval_a@hotmail.com / ORCID ID: 0000-00015766-712X

Maria Teresa Prieto Quezada

University of Guadalajara (MEXICO)

CE: materesaprieto@yahoo.com.mx / ORCID ID: 0000-0002-3299-2927

Jose Claudio Carrillo Navarro

Indigenous Communities Support Unit. University of Guadalajara (MEXICO)

CE: jccn1964@gmail.com / ORCID ID: 0000-0002-5320-7545

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SUMMARY

The purpose of this paper is to describe the conditions of violence in school contexts and the imperative to train teachers capable of developing environments of peaceful coexistence in schools and classrooms. Likewise, guiding principles are proposed to guide practical action, recognizing the conditions of educators and the experiences of intervention located in basic education schools in the entity. It is based on an analytical and descriptive framework, where both diagnoses and studies approached from the perspective of various theorists in the field of school violence are recovered, in this sense, more emphasis is placed on their results as contributions to the phenomenon. This is justified by the demand to emphasize the need to train teachers in basic schools social skills and the construction of environments for peaceful coexistence as a condition of the harmonious development of subjects in school condition.



Keywords: School violence. Peaceful coexistence. Teachers.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to describe the conditions of violence in school contexts and the imperative to train teachers to transform peaceful coexistence environments in schools and classrooms. Likewise, the guiding principles are proposed to guide the practical action, thinking about the conditions of the educators and starting from intervention experiences located in basic education schools in the entity. It starts from an analytical and descriptive framework, where both diagnoses and studies approached from the perspective of various theorists in the field of school violence are recovered. The intervention proposal has been implemented in school situations and its results are more emphasized as contributions to the phenomenon. This is justified by the demand to underline the need to train in the teachers of basic schools' social skills and the construction of environments for peaceful coexistence as a condition of the harmonious development of the learners.

Keywords: School violence. Peaceful coexistence. Teachers.

Introduction

Addressing the phenomenon of school violence is not a simple proposal, so we consider it necessary to focus on trainers, key actors, since they live daily and direct experiences with learners, knowing their real conditions and their limits about knowledge and understanding of school violence is a priority. On the other hand, it is not possible to understand the phenomenon, without describing its social, cultural and school dimensions, so we dedicate a section to both national, international and state diagnoses of the current situation of school violence, located the phenomenon in the case of bullying or violence between peers, for being, according to these diagnoses, the most recurrent and serious phenomenon due to its negative consequences on learners.



In subsequent sections, principles are proposed that are suggested to guide intervention actions in the face of the phenomenon of school violence, it should be noted that as guiding principles they are not prescriptions but guiding axes of action. Likewise, the perceptions that basic education teachers have and that are recovered from studies and interventions carried out in primary schools of the entity are analytically addressed.

The various investigations, in both the national and international context, emphasize teacher training to generate environments that promote the culture of peace in schools. However, as our studies show, we also have to recover the knowledge of teachers, where beliefs are based, perhaps the most widespread is that violence comes from families and, therefore, it is the task of parents to attend to it. This has led to unfortunate consequences, perhaps the most recurrent is the trivialization of the phenomenon in both allologic and school contexts.

Although, according to Lucio, Prieto and Carrillo (2018), teachers, for the most part, mention the interest in attending and assertively intervening in the problem, they show their bewilderment at the lack of support, resources and advice. The task is great and it should involve various agents of civil society, managers, managers, school community, parents, among others. The conclusions are reflective and invite the task of thinking and acting in the face of the phenomenon, considered one of the main obstacles to a harmonious development from schools, spaces par excellence that form reflective citizenship and subjects for peaceful coexistence.

Problematization: The geography of violence in schools

In today's society, institutions such as the family and the school continue to be fundamental co-participants in the task of educating the new generations. However, according to Epstein (2002) the projects of one and the other may be different from each other, in their ends or in the means used to obtain them. This author analyzes the role of both in this process, but above all the ways in which children and adolescents are marking their perception of violence before the adult generation. In this sense, exposure to violent models, especially during childhood and youth, leads to the justification of violent behavior, and increases the risk of exercising it. Peer abuse, also known as bullying, in English, translates into various forms of psychological, verbal or



physical aggression, which occur repeatedly over a certain time. In the case of Mexico, there is a considerable increase in the face of a social context where violence becomes an increasingly daily reality. The regression to less civilized forms to coexistence points out De Vargas (1999) is evident in the face of the triumph of more individualistic values.

Given this, collaborative and participatory strategies are suggested that mobilize the actors of the school, in order to develop the capacity of the students to value themselves, to listen to others, to respect, to know how to negotiate and to resolve conflicts peacefully, within the framework of clear rules applicable to the school community as a whole. This author (De Vargas, 1999) distinguishes four types of violence among young people:

- The one that comes from the depths of the psychic, related to the instinct of conservation, the affirmation of self and the will to power.
- The one that comes from playful or playful behaviors.
- The one that comes from adult agents such as educators or family members as part of responses with excessive force.
- The one that can be qualified as cultural, associated with more or less primitive conceptions that conflict with those that deprive in society.

Given these typologies of violence, the phenomenon of bullying or peer violence is considered one of the biggest problems in the country, according to statistics compiled in 2017, Mexico is the country in the world that registers the most cases of bullying per year. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimates that some 18.8 million basic education students have ever been bullied. (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO, 2017, para. 4).

For its part, the organization Confianza e Impulso Ciudadano indicated that Mexico continues to be the leader in bullying problems worldwide, said Luis Wertman, president of the organization. (El Financiero, s.d.) .

According to the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) in Mexico, the number of minors affected increased by 10% in the last two years. That is, almost 7 out of 10 suffer some



type of violence. 40.24% of students reported being bullied. 25.35% have received insults and threats. While 17% beats and 44.7% said they had experiences of verbal, psychological, physical violence, even through social networks. (Valdez, 2014).

While the physical violence against children suffered in the family decreases as their age increases, it increases in the school context. In that study, two-thirds of children in basic schools in Mexico said they had received at least one physical assault during the past two years. In addition, emotional violence – in both contexts, family and school, increases with age, which is evidenced by the fact that study participants spontaneously said that the first thing they would change about their school are the frequent situations of violence they experience in it.

For its part, the Secretary of Education Jalisco (SEJ) reported that they have reported 22 cases from January to June 2019 of violence between equals in the school environment, registered in basic education. It was also highlighted in a survey of just over 39,000 students, that in the state 17 percent of minors in elementary schools and 14 percent in secondary schools are victims of abuse by their peers. (Larios, 2019).

By interpreting these data it is possible to realize that the school is not a scenario of coexistence where it necessarily deprives harmony, but that many contexts can become spaces of conflict and discomfort for certain students, due to an unacceptable situation both at the school and social level. Violence simply should not exist. On the other hand, with regard to the protection of the rights of children and young people in Mexico, the formulation of laws that regulate the behavior of subjects who live together in public and private school institutions is still incipient. In this sense, article nine of the General Education Law of Jalisco establishes the obligation of the State to take measures to ensure that the student has the protection and care necessary to preserve their physical, psychological and social integrity on the basis of respect for their dignity. However, in the face of the emergence of new forms of school violence, a bill is required aimed at achieving conditions for healthy coexistence and action and prevention against any type of school aggression.

Guiding principles of intervention on student abuse



Those of us who work in school education must encourage children, adolescents and young people, a certain group of key ideas, or guiding values, through reflection on everyday events. Respect for the environment and for all the beings with whom they live in it, has to be a priority in the training of students. In this sense, we agree that education should promote three feelings that form the personality of students from an early age: compassion, indignation at the unjust and respect for difference. The first of these makes us recognize the other as a neighbor, as a fellow, and react in his help to situations that demand our solidarity, such as physical, psychological or social pain. The second, indignation at the unjust, comes from the ethical value of justice, which obliges the recognition of the dignity of people, protest, opposition and action in circumstances where such dignity is trampled underfoot. Finally, respect for difference acquires its best expression in tolerance, which means letting people be and not attacking them for being different.

One of the main challenges of the current generations of teachers is to face the normalization of violence between girls and boys, that is, the growing insensitivity in them to violence. On the other hand, strategies are needed to stop abuse in school, with attachment to the culture of respect for human dignity. The violence that children, adolescents and young people are currently experiencing in school is a violation of their fundamental rights, so eradicating it is everyone's commitment and responsibility.

Teachers' perception of violence

In the study "Violence and school: towards the understanding of its manifestations and imaginaries present in the teacher-student relationship" (Pinzón, Rodríguez, Riveros and Martínez, 2002), which addresses the understanding that teachers have of school violence, it was found that teachers possess a series of conceptions that refer, in the first place, to the fact that "violence comes from the external conditions in which students live" (p.320) as abuse or lack of affection and accompaniment in processes of formation of children. In other words, when there is violence in the environment, it is transferred to the school and, therefore, it is within the families where the problem should be treated and not in the school.



An issue that emerges from the above is that of the definition of the functions of the teacher, in terms of elucidating whether it corresponds to attend to the conflicts that arise in the different school spaces. In the study cited, it is drawn as conclusions, that:

- a) Teachers are not prepared to face situations of violence, such as those involved in dealing with overly aggressive students or with problems of disruptive behaviors.
- b) Teachers and the school institution focus all their work and structure on the teaching of programmatic content, something that however for students does not make sense, so finally increasingly stronger ways of control must be established over them, which ends up turning the school more into a center of control than of learning and teaching.

Some of the problems or conflicts that teachers at the basic level face in everyday life have not yet become an object of research. The situations that teachers face on a daily basis are resolved from their own intuitions, school traditions and assumptions, but they do not start from a systematic process of reflection and knowledge, from which strategies can be favored for their attention by teachers. They do not regularly investigate the nature of the processes or the causes of the problems they face. There is no priority that makes it possible to study the aspects that arise in their practice.

There is a multiplicity of situations of a social nature in school activity that teachers do not consider to be part of their priorities for work or intervention. To a large extent and as a result of the formation of stereotypes, the roles assumed obey more to the institutional signaling, than to what the daily problems summon and that, although they affect it, they, the teachers, are not always prepared to attend.

Determining whether a problem corresponds to certain subjects to attend or not, in the case of teachers, sometimes corresponds to a certain division of labor and the objects of reflection that the social and economic structure imposes on the school community. In this sense, the things that teachers have to attend to and think about are delimited by the mechanisms of social distribution of power and control. Teachers are fundamental actors in the favorable transformation of the scenario, since as Tenti (2009) points out:



Teachers will have to be increasingly 'experts in the culture of the new generations' to the extent that the transmission of school culture (the curriculum) must take into account not only the biopsychological stages of development... but also the diverse cultures and relations with culture that characterize the recipients of pedagogical action (p. 52).

Although the problems of school violence are part of an unencouraging scenario, in the case of Jalisco, the panorama is also serious, since according to the Secretary of Education Jalisco (2019), nine out of 10 children suffer violence, this phenomenon reaches the school population, in the context of basic education, in large cities, since a series of behaviors and situations of violence proliferate that until recently were little taken into account in studies and institutional actions as characteristic aspects of the student population, on the one hand, and as problematic foci on which to turn attention and undertake improvement programs. (Larios, 2019).

The lack of reference to these problems, at the institutional level, and its correlation with the lack of teacher training programs in the line of conflict management and the learning of attitudes that favor the development of awareness in the actors of the educational process in the terms established by global bodies such as UNESCO, designated by concepts such as education for peace and education for coexistence, aspects that are favored by educational policies in various countries such as Brazil, France and Spain, represents a further gap in the case of our country with respect to international trends, where support for this comes to droppers and not so much because it was mandatory to join them, but because it should represent a priority orientation to understand and seek alternative solutions to a problem that in our schools becomes increasingly lacerating.

Leaving out of the inventory of priorities of attention, in the educational field, this situation, for whatever reasons, implies a strong contradiction with the official discourse itself in the aspect of educational quality, while it denies the fundamental conditions to generate learning environments conducive to achieving it.



A new problem means and provokes the need to think about it differently. The tools with which we fail to understand a new situation imply the need to make new proposals to scrutinize it, to carry out alternative interventions, not to establish elegant immobilization machinery.

Sensitizing teachers about the need to invest reflection and intervention of strategies paradigmatically not considered in their work, which pay to the issue of a training for coexistence directed towards themselves and their students should be one of the fundamental priorities of today's school.

At present it seems that the most important priority in the training of teachers lies in having processes of disciplinary and / or pedagogical updating according to the requirements of the development of science and technology, and that they also become users of recent advances in learning technologies. The pre-eminence of these aspects of training for teachers, to the detriment of what they should possess in aspects of social, emotional and coexistence, can be one of the explanations for the fact that a kind of indifference prevails in the teachers themselves towards the phenomenon of violence, which occurs in the "global village", or in the everyday environment, but especially the one that takes place in the specific space of the school.

What is the knowledge of teachers about this problem? What role do educational purposes play in this perspective? Are teachers within the teaching and learning process not immersed and in turn affected in social problems and coexistence? To what extent does the school have a responsibility to promote or generate the development of skills to face situations of violence? What explains why the teacher does not become aware, or does not show it, about his role within the problem of the training of students in social skills, or more specifically, what determinants influence for teachers to take education for coexistence as part of their role? How to generate an awareness in teachers about the existence of conflict and forms of violence in school spaces? What real scope can a teacher training program have in addressing the problem of school violence? What strategies could favor the development of skills in teachers to improve the relationships of coexistence and cooperation in students within the classroom?

These questions are not raised to be answered, but to measure some edges of the complexity of the problem, we start from the entity that the teacher is an agent that favors,



through the different processes of socialization typical of school activity, the conservation and development of the structures and relationships that guide social life in a given context. From these, some priorities emerge that we believe should be taken into account in any proposal for intervention:

1. The identification of the assumptions, pre-presaberes beliefs, or implicit theories, that teachers have about conflict situations that interfere with the processes of school coexistence.
2. The detection, from the perspective of teachers, of some of the training needs to address social problems that affect these processes of coexistence.
3. Training, guidance, follow-up and guidance, through tutors, in the timely detection and design of intervention proposals aimed at the training of teachers to address situations of conflict and violence that occur in the school space.

Educate for non-violence. From theory to practice

Intervention on a problem as widespread and complex as that of abuse among students, in addition to requiring the participation of various actors in the school community, implies having a series of ideas and key practices to prevent or address the problem. Some of these ideas and practices, which we suggest promoting in the teacher-student and student-student interactions of daily school work are, among others:

- The rejection of violent images, as well as unnecessary displays of force.
- The promotion of a culture of respect for difference and solidarity with vulnerable individuals and groups.
- The exploration and attention of cases of peer abuse in the school community.
- The recognition and use of institutional authority to implement rules of coexistence.
- The need for the work of integration of groups and the teaching of social competences.

In relation to intervention, either as prevention or as a form of conflict resolution and attention to situations of abuse among students, various techniques and programs can be used, according



to the educational levels and social contexts where the school work is carried out. In this regard, Cohen, 2003; Ortega and Del Rey, 2003; Viñas, 2007; Coronado 2008, give different theoretical contributions to this topic, as well as our experience in the study and intervention on abuse among students suggest that it is necessary a training specifically oriented towards the understanding of this problem by teachers and students. In other words, it is not possible to resolve conflicts, to educate for peace and coexistence, if one does not recognize, in principle, the existence of the problem, its nature and dimensions.

In a previous work (Lucio, Prieto and Carrillo, 2018), we found that, on the one hand, students linked to this situation, regardless of the role they play in it (victims, aggressors or spectators) recognize the effects of abuse on those who suffer it, but also, worryingly, that many of them, when taking the role of aggressors, experience satisfaction. This puts us on alert to the possible fact that violent forms of coexistence, which includes abuse between students, are perceived as something natural, which should be a reason for reflection and rejection.

The strategy is based on a series of actions aimed at provoking in teachers and students a thorough reflection on what the problem represents, why it is a problem and what means there are to face it, from a perspective that feeds on the actors' own responses. It is a question of sensitizing them basically about the experience of those who are victims, about the values at stake in particular cases of abuse among students, and giving an overview of the actions that at the individual, institutional and social level can be carried out so that the problem decreases.

In this sense, we suggest, based on our intervention work developed in basic schools (Prieto, Carrillo and Jiménez, 2009) two intervention methodologies. One, the training workshop for mediation and negotiation and the other, based on the didactic use of narrative, where results of field research (interviews and questionnaires carried out on primary school children) victims of abuse by their peers due to reasons such as their religious, ethnic, physical and economic differences are recovered. The original results of the fieldwork will then become stories, through the dynamic The Tree of Life (narrative therapy) where forms of work are proposed in school groups and making a proposal for teacher training.



In our interventions, the narrative takes on a singular meaning, as Valencia has pointed out:

Narrative is an important resource not only to investigate the subjectivity of educational actors, it is also an element for the catharsis of those who have lived experiences of violence; or show the motives of the perpetrators; the revelation of lived situations becomes a reflective element that leads to analyze one's own life and to assume a moral judgment before the experience experienced and reflected from the subject that is narrated, that a voice and a face are configured before the other, that becomes visible before the world of its own story or invents a mask of the social world; that assumes the route as a path of difference from the understanding with the others (Valencia, 2015, p. 7)

Thus, the most appropriate intervention proposal, according to our experiences in the field, are those where the subjects themselves, from their own experiences, resignify and assume reflective judgments to change their environment from a new attitude. This process is not simple, it requires accompaniment, advice and support.

Some of the teacher's perceptions of school violence

In our intervention work carried out in the contexts of basic education schools (Prieto and Valencia, 2015 and Prieto, Carrillo and Jiménez, 2009) we infer that:

- Few teachers devote significant moments to addressing the issue of violence within the classroom and there are no elements to conclude whether it is a preventive or corrective strategy.
- In general, teachers use dialogue to face these situations, but their word is different inside the classroom than outside it, inside they develop a corrective function, while outside the classroom, a more dialogical tone. Most point out using it in the class, although it remains to detail the content and form of the messages, and the impact of the social context of the



classroom during this type of intervention, unlike the one that occurs when the teacher talks to the student outside the class.

- In general, teachers are willing to deal with these issues of violence in the classroom, but they report that the intervention and commitment of families is needed.
- Most teachers point to bullying among students as the main problem of violence in the classroom.
- Regarding the position of teachers about bullying, as a fundamental problem within the coexistence in the school and the circumstances associated with its occurrence, the problem is perceived by teachers, although it does not account for the way in which they see that their participation affects it, promoting or inhibiting certain norms and practices of socialization in which there may be a specific position towards this form of aggression.
- Another key aspect that generates violence has to do with intolerance within the school environment that involves boys and girls alike. Result of the absence of an important value in the current social life, and as a consequence, it projects in a significant way the possibility of an education for coexistence, whose central agents were the teachers. However, this possibility is faced with institutional obstacles, such as the lack of incentives for those who participate in such a program.
- An aspect to be highlighted, without a doubt, has to do with the repeated reference that teachers make to the aggression of which they are victims.

Therefore, it can be said that all teachers are aware of their role in generating coexistence skills, however, most state that the programs and contents of study focus on generating knowledge skills, but not relationships with the other; "we have stuffed the learner with knowledge and neglected skills and aptitudes" (Prieto, Carrillo and Jiménez, 2009, p. 54). That is, there is perception, but no methods are developed to implement, at least once or twice throughout the semester, a class focused on the importance of skills for nonviolence and coexistence practices. All teachers, without exception, admitted their commitment and responsibility to promote this type of skills in their students, but they demand training, support and accompaniment. Some of



the competences and skills that, we believe, teachers should develop, and that in turn they considered fundamental to develop their work, are the following:

1. Personal development: through which the motivation to progress in the school space is externalized, with assertive attitudes and behaviors and the acceptance of challenges that reveal self-esteem, self-confidence and adaptation, all factors of emotional intelligence.
2. Teamwork: the ability to work with others and achieve goals, make and fulfill plans, and make appropriate decisions together, which is also part of emotional competence.
3. Promote problem solving, individually or as a team: the understanding of them, the elaboration of a plan and its execution. This comprehensive vision is what the productive world demands of professionals in any area to recognize their skills.
4. Educate in peace and non-violence, based on human rights, democracy and train in values, tolerance and respect for difference.
5. Improve coexistence in the school context, educating in the prevention, forecasting, and protection of children looking for non-violent solution alternatives.
6. Prevent violence and achieve the peaceful resolution of conflicts through self-knowledge, respect for others and the next.
7. Establish healthy limits and correctives in the face of initial situations of violence between peers, in a timely manner.

It is necessary, on the other hand, to point out that these skills are imperative, the result of analysis of the phenomena of violence expressed and referred to by the actors themselves in schools as necessary actions to build a peaceful coexistence that restructures the school fabric and affects the social environment.

By way of conclusion



Throughout this work, we have moved from diagnosis to proposal. And in the latter, to show the imperatives, demands and challenges of building an environment for peaceful coexistence from the subjects of the school community.

We can consider that the school, the family, teachers, the government, the private sector and civil society must offer children resources, time and dignified and quality spaces for them to develop activities, in addition to promoting attitudes and values based on responsibility and respect for the other, promoting a culture of non-violence and peaceful resolution of conflicts in an educational environment in which peer abuse and bullying and its destructive effects disappear. It is about breaking a scheme where force majeure destroys people, and replacing it with one where differences and norms are accepted to guarantee respect for others.

The challenge is to accept the challenge of training educators for peace, who rescue their teaching knowledge and allow, from it, to resignify it. That is why it is from the experiences located in schools and school communities where the analysis and reflection of the problems of violence that both students and teachers have lived and live daily could be developed.

The perspective that arises from a model from the subjects themselves is the most propitious, in this regard, two interventions are mentioned in this work: A training workshop for mediation and negotiation; and, a didactic use of narrative. Both proposals form a single framework, in the voice and attitude of the actor is the problem and it is in community how it can be made visible and attended from the subjects themselves. As can be seen, the proposal is located in collaborative learning. The possibility of transformation lies in the recognition of the problems made by the subjects themselves, but this, as they have made explicit, demands spaces, supports, interventions, accompaniment of experts, and, above all, collaboration of families, managers, educational and civil authorities. The task is complex, but we are confident in the possibility of achieving significant progress as has already been evidenced in the contributions of various studies and interventions.

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