

2. POSITIVE PEDAGOGY IN ART TEACHER TRAINING

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Abstract: *The pedagogical conception that each teacher assumes when referring to the teaching profession will guide his strategy for working with students. A teacher equally concerned with forming the competencies inscribed in school programs and helping the full flowering of the personality of the students with whom he works could adopt positive pedagogy as a frame of reference. The present work aims to review the principles of positive pedagogy, to nuance the roots of this paradigm in the light of current research and to bring to the fore its potential in terms of educational strategies that can be successfully adapted in the training of art teachers.*

Key words: *positive pedagogy, pedagogical movement/concept, teacher training*

I. Introduction– the pedagogy of love is a positive pedagogy

The knowledge gained by students in school is internalized and becomes an asset for them when it takes place in a safe space. This space is defined by the quality of the relationships that take place there, when the relationships between the student and the teacher, between the student and other colleagues, between the student and himself are loving ones; i.e. full of care and acceptance, mutual trust and respect.

In the work "Teaching Community. A Pedagogy of Hope", the author Bell Hooks once again brings to mind a truth that experience as pedagogues and teacher trainers has shown us: "When teachers teach with love, combining care, commitment, knowledge, responsibility, respect, and trust, we are often able to enter the classroom and go straight to the heart of the matter, which is knowing what to do on any given day to create the best climate for learning." (Hooks, 2003, p. 134, cited by Debrot, R., A., Vu, K. T., 2022, p. 22). In such a safe space, learners of any age can express their curiosity, ask, experiment, search, take risks, discover but also fail in their searches. They know that in such a space someone will catch them in a possible fall or show them the right direction in an intersection of conflicting information. In such a space every difficult experience can become a positive, growth experience. The teacher is responsible for creating such a socio-emotional space of safety. The pedagogical relationship that he will achieve with each individual child and with the whole class can have a great influence on the experiences that form the self-concept of the students - confidence in their own forces, self-esteem, beliefs about their value.

In the work "The effective teacher", the American pedagogue and psychologist, Thomas Gordon argues that teaching causes learning only if the relationship between teacher and student is good and authentic (T. Gordon, 2012), and for this the basic condition is that both partners must feel comfortable with each other. In order for this psychological comfort to be felt by both participants in the learning process, a list of characteristics of a good relationship are listed by the author: "openness and transparency, thus each will be willing to risk being honest

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with the other; care for the other, then each knows that he is valued by the other; interdependence (as the opposite of dependence) on the other; differentiation, to allow the other to be unique, creative, individual; mutual satisfaction, so that the needs of one are not fulfilled despite the other" (op.cit., p.44-45).

In order for a relationship to reach these characteristics, the teacher must be the one to build moments of communication and negotiation for different situations that arise, to be willing to understand the students' behaviours before categorizing them as acceptable behaviours or unacceptable behaviours. He will also be the one who will give time to solve the problems that prevent teaching-learning moments from taking place, sometimes even from the time provided in the timetable for lessons. In this way, a climate of positivity will be built in the class, where everyone flourishes, both the students and the teacher.

Positive pedagogy is understood in the present work as a pedagogy of love, a pedagogy of trust in the potential of each student/learner, a pedagogy concerned with finding and using those practices that support the full flowering of the learner. It is the same understanding that other researchers concerned with the subject use in their studies (O'Brien & Blue, 2017, Shukla, P., Stephen McClean, S., & Elizabeth Hidson E., 2020). Positive pedagogy is a humanistic pedagogy whose practices we use ourselves in the training of future art teachers.

Humanistic approaches in teacher training are not new. Debrot R.A. cites a work from 1942, written by Giles H., H. and McCutchen, "Exploring the Curriculum", in which the authors emphasize the importance of the human quality of the future teacher, beyond his qualities in the use of didactic technology and beyond scholarly knowledge of the field/ the discipline he was teaching: "The first requirement for growth of teachers through any means is that they work under conditions which are favourable to their growth as person, and that to be a good teacher one must be the first of all a good human being" (Giles et al, 1942, p. 231, cited by Debrot, R., A., Vu, K. T., 2022, p. 22).

2. Explanatory theoretical frameworks for the concept of "positive pedagogy"

Investigating the conceptual sources of the term, we identified three directions that we will summarize in the following lines: 1) the paradigm of student-centred education continued and deepened by socio-constructivist pedagogy; 2) positive psychology; 3) european legislation interested in positive parenting.

2.1. The student-centred education paradigm, where the child is respected and valued, helped to discover and overcome innate potential

Concern for the full development/flourishing of the human being is the very essence of the definition of education. Therefore, although a concept of the 21st century, positive pedagogy has deep roots in the philosophy of education of the 19th and 20th centuries, where there has always been an interest in researching ways in which children can become better, fulfilled adults who manifest their purpose on earth. The paradigm of student-centred education continues and deepens the ideas of the current/movement called "the century of the child", in which pedagogues such as Maria Montessori, Ellen Key, Ovid Decroly, etc. move the centre of approach to the educational act from the school content and the master teacher's expertise towards respecting the uniqueness and individuality of children in training. Then,

the movement is continued in constructivist and socio-constructivist theories concerned with understanding how knowledge is formed in the child (DeVries, & Kohlberg, 1997; Fosnot & Perry, 2005; Kolb, 1984; Piaget, 1948/1973, works cited by Mascolo, M., 2009).

These pedagogical movements bring a multitude of implications in school practice but also in scientific research so that student-centred pedagogy becomes a subject of great interest. Serin H., 2018, reviews the features of student-centred pedagogy and we present them synthetically in the following lines: knowledge is not transmitted directly by the teacher, but in a mediated manner; students have an active role in learning, they have access to individualized routes by choosing learning topics or the order of topics according to interest; the creation of the meaning of knowledge in students takes place mainly through collaboration and cooperation, together with peers or teachers; students are actively engaged in constructing knowledge using their own experiences and actions; learning experiences are shared with peers in specifically designed activities; opportunities for independent study are created by facilitating access to varied contents, study materials and various educational means; the role of the teacher is to be a facilitator for all these experiences.

2.2. Positive psychology - what are the conditions that help a person to flourish?

Positive psychology is a very young branch of psychology founded by Martin Selinger and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in the early 2000s, which already has multiple research and application areas. It begins by studying happiness, well-being, and life satisfaction and the conditions that lead to them. Later the object of study of positive psychology expands to the study of human flourishing and the flourishing life.

Creating fertile learning environments where both students and teachers can relate safely is one of the premises of positive pedagogy and is supported by evidence from the field of positive psychology. There are studies that prove that “positive emotions, character traits, cognitions, and personal resources play a vital role in people's ability to engage positively and productively in life and work, and in maintaining a general sense of well-being. (...) A positive mood is associated with expanded capabilities, developed personal resources and an increase in resilience and coping skills when the person faces challenges (Fredrickson 2006, Huebner and Hills 2011, cited by O'Brien, M., & Blue, L., 2017, p. 378).

Positive psychology demonstrates that both positive emotions and cognitions and personal resources, the strengths of each, can be shaped in both the family and school environments (Fredrickson 2009; Peterson and Seligman 2004, O'Brien, M., & Blue, L., 2017). A first step is knowing positive emotions (love, joy, gratitude, contentment, interest, hope, inspiration, awe, etc.) and creating educational contexts in which they can be experienced (Fredrickson 2019). The study by O'Brien, M., & Blue, L. 2017, which is an 18-month action research with a team of researchers and 3 dedicated teachers, points out and expands the list of possible practices to increase positivity in school on three levels: of discourse, of action, of relationships. Thus, the group of researchers creates the architecture of practices that build:

- classes of students in which they speak in an explicit positive discourse by: sharing positive experiences, by being aware and assuming an attitude, namely "being my best self", by using positive language;
- classes of possibilities: by learning with meaning and intention (purpose), by bringing a positive approach to each individual learning situation, by developing a positive sense of self as a capable, competent learner;
- classes with positive learning relationships, both with others and with oneself.

The results of the study carried out by O'Brien, M., & Blue, L. 2017 bring evidence that reinforces the application possibilities of positive psychology in the school environment.

2.3. Parenting – the rights of the child in the legislation

Another source that introduces the concept of "positive pedagogy" into the language of concerns for education is represented by the parenting area of the beginning of the 21st century. Here, positive pedagogy is an educational principle that appears as a reaction to traditional family education, after the paternalistic family model and education in the paternalistic family is replaced by a multitude of other family models (monoparental, reconstituted, democratic, etc.). Positive parenting "a behaviour based on the best interest of the child, which aims to raise and make him responsible, which is non-violent and which provides him with recognition and assistance, establishing a set of benchmarks favouring his full development" (Council of Europe, 2006, cited by Maciejak, V., 2020, p.16).

Since in parenting the concept of "positive education" can be challenged by its opposition to "negative education", clarifications are offered. In this sense, Maciejak, V., 2020, points out that positive education encourages parents to focus on what is going well, on the child's qualities and potential, and to help him flourish, develop from here. Negative aspects, personal limits, conflicts, oppositional attitudes, etc. will be considered as opportunities for development and addressed as such. It does not mean that we ignore what is not appropriate (in behaviours, in attitudes), but that these situations are approached through the lens of love. They are identified, named and corrected without violence.

Positive education is centred on listening and understanding children, on the search for solutions and on consensus, on creating a collaborative framework, the parent being a guide for his child and who, in the situations that arise, looks for solutions adapted to the needs of his child, together with the child.

3. Examples of good practices in the training of arts teachers that support human flourishing - principles of positive pedagogy

In summary, positive pedagogy refers to the educational practices adopted by teachers to create the space - emotional, social, physical - optimal for the complete flowering of the child, helping him to develop as a complete person: mind, emotion, body, soul. Maciejak, V. (2020) summarizes the principles of positive pedagogy: attention to children's needs and autonomy, non-violence, empathic listening, collaboration. When student artists prepare to become teachers, they are helped to acquire these principles by experiencing them together with us, their teachers. Here are some examples of these practices:

3.1. Attention to the natural needs of the pupil/student: to be accepted, to be

safe, to belong, to be autonomous/independent.

If we were to discuss the principles of the now traditional pedagogy, attention to the natural needs of the students could be correlated with the principle that refers to the organization of the activity according to the age of the student. Things must be considered much more deeply. The spiritual soul being of the child needs to be taken into account. This means consciously observing the child in order to be able to truly perceive his being, to be able to understand and love him. It is a work that takes time, dedication on the part of the teacher. In school practice, one can observe the child's behaviour, the nature of the relationships he establishes with his colleagues and the teacher, the results of his work, and this not only on a cognitive level but above all: how he walks, how he moves, how he plays, how he greets, how he expresses himself, how he writes, how he takes care of his notebooks, how he draws, how he paints, how he builds, how he makes. The teacher is thus a fine observer who seeks to penetrate beyond the surface of appearances and for this he observes the child for a long period of time.

For the preparation of a future teacher in this sense, an exercise is to observe the development of a plant, from the stage of seed, bulb, how it passes through the different stages of growth, reaches flowering and then again to the seed. Mere observation is not enough; it can be accompanied by a written journal and drawings. Another example might be observing a tree through the four seasons and drawing it. This kind of exercise requires a long time of observation, it is true, but it consciously educates patience. The one who practices these exercises should not self-sabotage by thinking that he does not know how to draw, he does not necessarily have to be a perfect artist, drawing is a means that enriches the training experience, therefore the expressive valences of the what achieves them, but the experience that the observer has regarding the observed object, translated into plastic visual language.

3.2. Physical non-violence is obvious, and next to that verbal non-violence: to communicate respecting the learner, without shaming him in order to correct him. When the child's behaviour is troublesome, clearly disrupts the learning activity, it is obvious that intervention and correction is necessary, and this requires a firm, determined tone but without reprimands, verbal corrections or without scolding the child in front of the whole class, without making him of shame. It is certainly necessary to talk with the student, to investigate what are the causes that determine the disturbances in his behaviour and attitude, but privately, it is necessary to talk with the parents and other fellow teachers to find suitable correction solutions.

Another aspect is related to the way the teacher conveys to the student that the results of his work are not at the desired or necessary level. The role of formative feedback is undeniable in this situation. However low the answer given by the child may be or however unsatisfactory the result of the student's work, the teacher can still identify at least one positive aspect from which to start the dialogue. In a drawing, a drawn line is more than nothing and two lines more than three, even if there is still a lot to practice before reaching an expressive drawing.

Therefore, in the training of future teaching staff, the provision of formative feedback is practiced, which involves the identification of at least one positive aspect that should be mentioned for the first time, on which the teacher's attention should

be focused first. It continues with suggestions for resuming the work, for improving the work to finish with a summary in which a positive idea expressed in general, if not macro neutral, is highlighted, but in no case does it end with a negative assessment.

3.3. Empathic listening, followed by adult goodwill

Empathy is a form of soul-level knowledge of another, an identification through living with other people, recognizing and sharing feelings experienced by another being, resonating. To listen empathetically means to open yourself to the soul of the person next to you, to resonate with his feelings to your soul even if the other's feelings are not expressed explicitly, it means openness to the world, to be interested in the world, in people, in the other, in the human being in front of you, with all senses awake. In the training practice of future teachers, exercises can be carried out that awaken the senses, that make the learners aware of themselves and what is around them, how they relate to their own selves and to others. Reading is a good way to practice putting yourself in the place of someone else, of the character (a reading club can be developed where the biographies of people who managed to overcome extreme situations are discussed); overcoming prejudices and stereotypes (set out to meet one new person a week, set out to learn something new about a known person, be curious but respecting the limits of intimacy; at the beginning of the course, when the students do not know each other board games, socialization, inter-relationship games); volunteer activities increase the degree of empathy of the people involved.

3.4. Collaboration and cooperation refers to the triad of teacher, student, parent; the parent's need to be a companion in the process of education, development, training - the situation in which the parent leaves the education/development/training of the child in the total care of the education system, the teacher, the educator, the teacher is harmful. Another aspect is not to transfer the parents' expectations or standards onto the educators or onto the child. Possible solutions in this sense would be the so-called *parents' school*, where meetings for getting to know each other, getting to know each other, forming and strengthening relationships between parents, teachers and children, organizing celebrations, excursions, sit-downs (creative activities such as crafts) would take place. For the training of students as future teachers, possible exercises are group activities that involve finding solutions through collaboration.

4. Conclusions

The current educational system is based on the notion of academic aptitude, being established at a time when there was an absolute need for public education, during the period of industrialization, as an emergency to create the labor force necessary for this era. The education of children in schools was carried out according to the principles of industrialization (Robinson, K, 2015): on the assembly line, you place/add/remove what is written in the production scheme, assemble the parts and a compliant product results. This is what happens in the model of education based on standards. It's just that such an important fact is being forgotten: the child is a unique being, with mind, body and soul.

It is impossible to educate him completely by abstracting from any of these

components; and even if at some point he will give an academic yield, receiving a good academic educational intervention (so rather cognitive) during his existence the effects of the lack of attention to the other plans will be seen. There are multiple concerns in the direction of the paradigm shift, with deep roots in pedagogical research. We need an awareness of these frames of reference and an assumption of them. One way can be by inserting in practice activities that implicitly or explicitly form the whole, flourishing man.

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