Differentiated Education in The Service of Preventing / Reducing The School Conflict

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Abstract

The present study aims at evincing the fact that the school conflict can be prevented by respecting and cultivating the differences between students. In school, between students themselves, between students and teachers are frequently break out tension states, who quickly become the conflict with negative effects on learning, also on school attendance. The causes of these tensions are frequently, but solutions do not manage to be the best. Departing from these aspects, the present paper, demonstrated that perfect would be to know the reasons that likely to cause so as to prevent their outbreak. The purpose of this study is to recommend different education as an instrument of to improve communication in school. It starts from the premise that physical the neglect of psychic potential of each pupil can be a significant cause of these conflicts. This study is based on a more ample research of regarding conflict management the school. In this regard; we exploited a few observations collected from the seminars work with students and their teaching practice activity. The study focuses on examples of good practice.

Keywords: management, learning, individual potential, differences, communication;

1. Introduction

The school environment is not only a space for learning and for psycho-behavioral training, but also a space for social relationships, for manifesting the emotional feelings of pupils, respectively of the groups of pupils. The main interest of the instructive-educational process on what regards the later aspect mentioned above is not fully independent from the one linked to education. This represents a situation that is not always in the advantage of the

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pupil because the personal negative tensions are cumulated in school and if they are neglected by teachers, they can lead to conflicts which will determine school failure. Conflict has also a constructive dimension; its generation and controlled manifestation help the process of learning, the development of the critical thinking and of the social relationships and prevent the burst and manifestation of violence. Essential for the use of these aspects are the teacher’s experience and the student’s habit to learn actively and by means of cooperation. To manifest a defensive or a neutral attitude, so as to prevent or to stop a conflict, are not recommended.

2. Hypothesis, objectives, observations and discussions

Starting from the premise that the management of the pupil’s emotions and of his emotional relationships with others, be they colleagues or teachers, represents an important component of the didactic activity, we aim at emphasizing even more the role of the teacher as a manager of his pupils. This quality must determine the teacher to apply different prevention techniques or to minimize the situations of educational crisis which can manifest also under the form of a school conflict. Among these techniques, we find as being fundamental the ones that imply getting to know the pupil and adapting the teaching-learning-evaluating strategies to the needs of each individual (Ionescu, 1980). In this respect, we will name some methodological aspects which will help approach the instructive-educational process from the perspective of differentiated assessment. Our observations are based on a bigger research that we have done among several groups of second year students (from Socio-Humanistic and Technical profiles) that were questioned regarding their own way of perceiving the training needed for the didactic career (to be more precise, what are their expectations and the actions that they are taking in this respect). For the great majority (80%) the school conflict represents a destructive action manifested violently towards other pupils (55%), one’s own parents (17%), towards teachers (23%) or other factors involved in the educational process (0.5%). Among those that have focused upon the importance of the conflicts manifested between pupils, they have considered that the main reason behind these negative actions is the up-bringing environment (35%), the inefficiency of the educational programmes (15%) and the poor class management (45%). From our point of view, these three responsibility directions can be analyzed independently in order to intervene efficiently against the negative effects that they may develop, but in order to reach the best results, it is needed to intervene in the area where these three are interdependent. Thus, we consider that these directions have a common aspect which is equally fundamental, and a starting and consequence factor: the pupil’s particularities, his individual structure and his own development potential. By respecting this reality and by applying the training and education programme according to its existence and ways of manifestation, it is our belief that the tensions from the school environment, especially those that lead to conflict, would be more diminished. Therefore, it is important to know the relationship between conflict and differentiated assessment (by this we mean adapting the instructive-educational process according to the development and learning particularities of each separate pupil), and also the methodological elements which optimize it. The skills, the interests, the psycho-behavioral features, the rhythm and the individual learning particularities are just some of the forms by means of which the individuals are different from one another.

Education must be permanently and intensively focusing on them (Jinga, & Negreț, 1994). This conviction is becoming more and more important, even though it refers only at the differences which emerge between the students that are considered to have a normal stage of development (Stanciu, & Ignat, 2006). In this case, the teaching practice searches for strategies to adapt the learning process according to the learning styles and the 9 types of known intelligence (Gardner, 2009). It is less interested in the development of the inclusive school (Vrășmaș, 2010), the one that ensures the integration of the students that do not show the normal stage of development (this issue refers to the students that require a special pedagogical attention, as a result of their abilities which are considered to be above average, the gifted students, or that have a deficiency of an intellectual, sensorial, psycho-motive, etc. nature (the students with Special Educational Needs). In this respect, the differentiated treatment represents a positive discrimination, manifested in order to generate the personal development from whom the entire society will benefit (Przesmycki, 2000). It is more important to link its purpose to the recognition and usage of the potential of each student, and to his training to become part of the society (Oprescu, 1996). Because we do not want for these differences to become inconveniences in the development of differentiated education, teacher's attention will fall upon the following aspects:
• cultivating students’ tolerance for those that are different than they are and of the wish to get involved in helping them (without putting a great accent on the feeling of compassion);
• discovering each student’s resources and by helping him to be aware of and to use them, so as to make him show what he knows, to understand the level he reached and what he must do next.

The disdain, the neglect or the emphasizing of the differences between the pupils contribute to the growing of tensions, especially those that have an affective-behavioral nature, which also leads to school conflicts (Conflict has two dominant components: the feelings and subjectivity). In this sense, we can distinguish between several forms of conflict which we will list below, starting from the presentation of their main generating sources:

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<tr>
<th>Reporting criteria</th>
<th>Causes that trigger and / or fueling the conflict</th>
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| The degree in which a teacher satisfies the individual/collective status of the pupil | • The lack of encouragement for the personal development of the pupil;  
• The behavior of the group in relation to the status of each individual;  
• The tendency to judge, to approve or to disapprove others (pupils or teachers). |
| The degree reached in accomplishing the (learning, administrative, collective, etc.) tasks: | • The distribution of unbalanced roles between the members of the group;  
• The distribution of tasks inadequate for the potential of each pupil;  
• The paucity or irregularity of the thinking processes and/or of the analysis made upon the activities;  
• The teacher’s lack of any intervention (avoidance of tackling the tensionate problems) or the authoritarian intervention by means of orders, threats, moralization or by imposing his own arguments, etc. |
| The type and the intensity of the interactions between the members of the group: | • The great number of interactions;  
• The heterogeneous composition of the group;  
• The lack of free will, the poor cooperation, the permanent state of tension;  
• The mistrust atmosphere. |
| The external context in which the group acts: | • The poor communication between groups;  
• The lack of support offered by school on what concerns the activity of the group, etc.;  
• The attitude of the teacher towards the tensions of a conflictual nature (no action, repression, compromise, the secrecy and the postponing of the final resolution, blaming those that have generated the conflict). |

Regardless of the factors mentioned above, the school conflict manifests on three main components:
• **cognitive** (the conflict is based on the existence of some contradictions at the level of the ideas and/or of the opinions of some group members regarding a certain phenomenon, or a certain situation);
• **affective** (the conflict appears in the conditions in which the group or some persons from that specific group manifest emotions, feelings that are incompatible with those of others);
• **behavioral** (the conflict is generated by the situations in which the attitude, the behavior of a person becomes intolerable to those around them).

These typologies are developed according to the intensity and the term of the tensions (a long / short term conflict), the moment when they take place (accidental / instrumental conflict), the equality/ inequality degree between those involved in the conflict (vertical / horizontal conflict), the purpose of those involved and according to the manifestation plan (intra-/interpersonal). From the above presentation, we can notice that all the forms of conflict start from the same aspects: not knowing the pupil and the maladjustment of the teaching-learning-evaluating activities to the pupil’s individual needs. Consequently, further on we propose a short description of the practices meant to assure the differentiated assessment, as a premise for preventing/diminishing the school (affective, and especially, the behavioral) conflict.
Table 2. The intervention and prevention strategies against the conflict

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<th>Intervention strategy</th>
<th>Means to reach the intervention and prevention strategies:</th>
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| The emotional Expression | • Exercises for verbal expression of one’s feelings, for associating a subjective state with an emotion etc.;  
• Exercises for associating some events with emotions, for understanding the effects of the events over the emotional state;  
• The students’ skill to talk about their emotional experiences helps the process of communication due to the fact that it makes them more available to hear and to make themselves heard. |
| The acceptance of each one’s subjectivity on what concerns certain things, facts, processes, etc | • The conflict may be avoided by encouraging the argumentative confrontations, by making the students accept the opinions of others.  
• The reflection upon the affective changes and the expression of emotions (“the logbook”, “the double entrance journal”, the essay of five minutes etc.). |
| Meditate over the significance of the things observed, from “looking back” over the things done |  |
| Others’ opinions for one’s own personal development | • The activities may focus on: exercises of verbalizing and the interactions with others, the critical reflections, the imaginative speculations, exercises for personal reflection. |

3. Conclusions

Of course, the theoretical approaches, the activities and the methodological suggestions cannot all be covered by the present study; those presented until now, are just some openings towards the perspective of associating education differentiated with conflict prevention in school. Therefore, a good teacher is the one that understands the pupil as an individuality distinct from the others that has a certain development potential and certain educational needs, and adapts his pedagogical action so as to represent the pupils’ needs (Mark, 2007). In this way, the sources that cause and aliment the conflict with the self and with the others will be diminished/disappear.

References