

Article

Pedagogical strategies for the improvement of school coexistence in students from 14 to 16 years old in an educational institution in the municipality of Cereté, Córdoba



Estrategias pedagógicas para el mejoramiento de la convivencia escolar en estudiantes de 14 a 16 años de una institución educativa del municipio de Cereté Córdoba

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Abstract

This research aimed to deepen the study of pedagogical strategies for the improvement of school coexistence in students from 14 to 16 years old in an educational institution of Cereté, Córdoba; taking into

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consideration a qualitative approach from which this phenomenon was analyzed from the understanding of conflicts and ways of dealing with them in a violent manner in academic spaces. For this purpose, the action research method was used, which was carried out in six phases from which the approach to the population, design and application of instruments, analysis of results and return to the educational community, where different patterns and particular situations were found, which were discussed and served as a basis for the development of a pedagogical strategy that in the future could be implemented in this and other educational spaces in order to improve coexistence in the classrooms.

Key words: Pedagogical strategies, school conflict, school coexistence, conflict resolution.

Resumen

Esta investigación pretendió profundizar en el estudio de estrategias pedagógicas para el mejoramiento de la convivencia escolar en estudiantes de 14 a 16 años de una institución educativa de Cereté, Córdoba; tomando en consideración un enfoque cualitativo desde el que se analizó este fenómeno a partir de la comprensión de los conflictos y formas de tramitar los mismos de manera violenta en los espacios académicos. Para este fin se usó el método de investigación acción, el cual se llevó a cabo en seis fases desde las que se realizó el acercamiento a la población, diseño y aplicación de instrumentos, análisis de resultados y devolución a la comunidad educativa, donde se encontraron distintos patrones y situaciones particulares que fueron discutidas y sirvieron de base para la elaboración de una estrategia pedagógica que en el futuro podría implementarse en este y otros espacios educativos a fin de mejorar la convivencia en las aulas.

Palabras clave: Estrategias pedagógicas, conflicto escolar, convivencia escolar, resolución de conflictos.

Introduction

Conflict has been inherent to coexistence among members of society, several authors, among which Sigüenza, W. and Crespo, J. (2012), state that in itself, conflict is inevitable, however, by paying due attention to the differences that cause them, it is possible to prevent negative consequences for the parties involved. Conflict

reaches all institutions that man has created for his development and coexistence, including schools, where conflicts between peers continue to occur repeatedly and with increasingly alarming consequences.

Based on the need to have an approach to the different school conflicts that occur in the classroom, the study of school conflicts that affect the school coexistence of adolescents between 14 and 16 years of age in an educational institution in the municipality of Cereté, Córdoba, is studied in depth. However, it should be taken into account that the management of school coexistence in basic and secondary education goes far beyond the nature of the processes carried out by the institutions; it is also important to recognize the context in which the students develop, the characteristics and way of life of the families/social groups to which they belong and, in general, all aspects related to their existence in a social space.

Multiple investigations have emerged around these elements, among which a study conducted in Murcia, Spain by Penalva (2018), entitled "School coexistence: A challenge of the XXI century, which aimed to know from the perspective of primary and secondary teachers of all the centers of Cieza", all those situations that occur more frequently in educational centers and that affect the institutional climate, the factors that cause it and the consequences that derive from them, stand out.

This study emphasizes that school coexistence is one of the aspects that most concerns the educational system, due to the increase in various violent manifestations or situations that alter the school climate, which has mobilized the scientific-educational community, awakening interest in delving deeper into this issue, due to its relevance and contribution to the functioning of the educational system.

Similarly, Avilez and Hidalgo (2021), conducted a study associated with psychosocial risk factors and problem behaviors in adolescents at the Fe y Alegría Emaus Educational Institution in the city of Quito, during the 2020-2021 school year, with the objective of establishing the relationship between psychosocial risk factors and problem behaviors in adolescents. Likewise, it was determined that the most frequent factors in the population in question are: violence, dropping out of school and child labor; aspects that are present in the adolescents under study, affecting their proper development.

At the national level, Úsuga (2018) in his study entitled: "School conflict from the perceptions of young offenders at school, highlights the fundamental of attention to all types of alterations in the relational order of the classroom". Precisely, the most frequent causes of violence are situations that are apparently not very transcendental and of low intensity, but unresolved. This research assumes violence and conflict as two different categories with a profound relationship: not every violent act implies a conflict, but a conflict situation can lead to violence. It concludes that the role of the educator is important as a decisive figure in the prevention and intervention of this phenomenon.

At the regional level, the research entitled: "Problems of school coexistence in educational institutions of the Colombian Caribbean: analysis from social pedagogy for the culture of peace", conducted by Cabrales et al. (2017), aimed to diagnose the main socio-educational problems of school coexistence in public educational institutions of the Colombian Caribbean in order to generate proposals for action for a culture of peace. It also sought to know the perceptions of directors and teachers about the problems associated with school and social coexistence. The results showed that the most common problem was family risk, specifically situations of abandonment and negligence on the part of parents and caregivers. Likewise, another problem that was evidenced within their institutions was violence among peers, bullying towards the LGTBI population, women, the disabled population, Afro-Colombians and indigenous people.

In this regard, Román and Murillo (2011) affirm that the quality of interpersonal relationships in the school directly affects student performance, thus denoting the importance of generating spaces in which well-being is present in the school. In fact, the topics of coexistence, conflict resolution, cooperation and teamwork are recognized as elements of international evaluations given their importance in the educational scenario. According to the authors, it is evident that in these relationships the behaviors, beliefs and attitudes of the members of the community are present and it is precisely their diversity that gives rise to different manifestations of collaboration, affection, friendship or, on the other hand, discrimination, prejudice and intolerance.

The concept of coexistence is assumed from Cárdenas (2018), who relies on the Colombian Ministry of National Education hereinafter MEN (2013), to state that school coexistence is: "The action of living in the company of other people in the academic context in a peaceful and harmonious manner. Set of relationships between people who are part of the educational community, focusing educational objectives to a comprehensive development." (p.16) For its part, the MEN is also emphatic in highlighting that part of this is the diversity of origins and interests of each person who is part of the educational community.

According to the above, the role of teachers and parents as responsible adults is essential for the student to achieve satisfactory progress in their educational process, which includes learning to relate to other beings that are part of their environment, protecting diversity, reaching agreements when required and taking part in concrete actions to improve the community in which they develop.

In this sense, it is necessary, for example, to have rules and agreements that ensure the common welfare and good coexistence, due to the awareness of the presence of conflict as a product of the differences that are part of human nature. Then, when emphasizing school coexistence, it should be clear that the relationships that arise among students are mediated and influenced by social contexts, i.e., school coexistence should not be thought of as an isolated context, but as one that connects and in which other contexts converge.

Therefore, the ideal is that each member of the educational community has the minimum conditions of well-being that in turn allow a good disposition with their environment. In such a way that the social relationships that take place in the institutions are forged in a healthy and adequate environment. This refers to individual physical and emotional health conditions, decent working conditions, safe and healthy environments (both within and outside the institution), rules of coexistence, socialization and spaces for dialogue and conciliation, respectively.

From this same perspective, conflict is assumed from the position of Galtung (1980), who considers it a crisis and an opportunity, a natural, structural and permanent fact in human beings. It starts from a situation of incompatible objectives, so that, instead of being solved, they are transformed. It implies a holistic vital experience,

where, in addition, it is a structural dimension of the relationship that can also manifest itself as a form of power relationship.

This implies that the conflict must be approached from the reality and the social and cultural conceptions of the community where it occurs, since the proposals aimed at understanding and solving them must respond coherently to it. In this sense, this project conceived the possibility of assuming conflict management as a constructive, dialogic and generative process among peers. In addition, it is recognized that the prevention actions developed will have repercussions in other spheres considered from the ecological theory as external systems that are in direct interaction with the population, in a way that influences not only individually, but also socially.

Materials and methods

In order to achieve the objective proposed in this study, a qualitative methodology was developed. In this sense Strauss and Corbin (2002) emphasize that "(...) qualitative research produces findings that are not reached through statistical procedures or other means of quantification." (p. 11). In this case, we did not seek to generate statistical data on numerical variations in terms of school conflicts, but we used the qualitative approach to identify the situations and types of school conflicts that occur in the Cereté IE and to analyze the conceptions, causes of conflicts, their effects on school coexistence, as well as the forms of resolution.

Now, taking into account that we are working in a social space and that we also intend to generate an educational proposal aimed at improvement, it is convenient to work from action research, which, according to Latorre (2005), in principle refers to a series of strategies designed to improve a social or educational space: "For us, action research is seen as a practical inquiry conducted by teachers, in a collaborative manner, with the purpose of improving their educational practice through cycles of action and reflection". (p.24). The target population was adolescents between 14 and 16 years of age from an educational institution in the municipality of Cereté, Córdoba, belonging to the 9th and 10th grades of secondary school. The type of sampling carried out was a non-probabilistic sampling. The sample was intended to include students with some kind of

proximity to school conflicts, and was comprised of 10 adolescents in 9th and 10th grades, 5 of whom were female and 5 male.

In order to carry out this research, it was necessary to follow the following phases:

Phase 1 Approach to the population

The first approach was made with some teachers and students, through this it was possible to show the conception that they have about school conflicts and the image they have of some students who passed near the place where the conversation took place.

Phase 2 Instrument design

The scheme of work corresponding to the development of the research objectives in relation to the techniques and instruments was presented:

Table 1. *Techniques and instruments associated with the objectives of the research.*

Specific objectives	Techniques	Instruments
I identify the students' conceptions of conflict, its types and forms of resolution in the Cereté EI.	Research workshop	Workshop guide
To describe the causes of school conflicts and their effects on school coexistence in the Cereté IE based on the perception of the students.	Focus Group	Question guide
Analyze pedagogical strategies aimed at improving school coexistence.	Documentary review	Bibliographic review
	Group Focal	Question guide

Source: own elaboration

Phase 3 Application of instruments

Instrument No. 1: Participatory workshop applied with the purpose of identifying the students' conceptions in relation to conflict, its types and forms of resolution in the Cereté EI.

Instrument No. 2: Focus group, through a meeting with the population under study, in order to describe the causes of school conflicts and their effects on school coexistence in the Cereté IE from the perception of the students.

Instrument No. 3: This instrument was used to conduct a thorough search of different books, articles, theses and other documents from which different pedagogical strategies aimed at improving school coexistence were compiled, which were analyzed in order to finally develop the strategy announced in the general objective.

Phase 4 Systematization of information

Once the instruments had been applied and the information had been collected, the information was systematized using matrices for the instruments used.

Phase 5 Analysis of information

With the matrices, we proceeded to present the information indicating the different codes found, the particular and unique situations that were then used to carry out the discussion and the elaboration of strategies that could be applied in the future to improve school coexistence.

Results

Phase 6 Socialization of results with the community

For the final phase of this work, a meeting was held with the educational community in which the results of the research were reported.

Data collection: Data was collected through documentary review, direct observation, research workshop and focus group.

Documentary review: This constituted the entry point to the research. Institutional and personal documents of the teachers were reviewed, related to student observers, discipline records and field diaries.

Direct observation: During visits to the institution, it was possible to record the behavior of the students both in the classrooms and in the rest yard, which was recorded in the notebook.

The research workshop: It allowed for reflection, debate, confrontation of ideas, knowledge and wisdom in order to achieve the collective construction of concepts such as coexistence and conflict.

The focus group: It allowed to capture the feelings, thoughts and experiences of the students, as well as to generate a space for interaction and reflection on the topic of coexistence and conflict.

For the analysis of the information, it was necessary to use the systematization matrices based on the research objectives, which made it possible to order and classify the data for analysis and later to discuss them in relation to what was set out in the frame of reference.

Upon inquiring about the students' conceptions of conflict, its types and forms of resolution, the workshop guide instrument allowed us to identify that among the students conflict is understood as a manifestation of violence, in which discussions between people, confrontations or disagreements are accompanied by negative emotions, fights, confrontations or in general problems that occur between human beings. With this, it is possible to infer that on the basis of the students' conception there is a notion associated with the existence of a difference of points of view that is eventually accompanied by an inadequate treatment of the conflict.

Regarding the types of conflicts, different scenarios were found with the particularity of a repeated mention of bullying with the following typologies: physical aggression, speaking ill of the other, signs or gesticulations interpreted in a hostile manner, disagreements based on trivial issues over lost objects, relational issues, hate speech, arbitrary disagreement with teachers and disagreements when carrying out group activities.

As for the forms of conflict resolution, the common denominator identified was the reference to dialogue, sincere listening and the search for solutions based on the analysis of their origin. In general, when faced with a situation, the mediation of an authority, either a teacher or the coordinator, is sought. It is worth mentioning that some students specify that it is necessary to give talks to guide a

route to deal with conflict situations, based on the recognition of the other as a person who has a value.

Likewise, after applying the guide of questions, the causes of conflicts were determined to be situations of a passionate nature (such as dating or sentimental relationships between peers), activity in social networks (such as a derogatory reference to a classmate through a publication), false rumors about someone, aggressive reactions to a specific disagreement, excessive trust between students that, when not managed, lead to unexpected situations such as unauthorized affectionate treatment and economic and religious differences, and even the content of different musical genres.

On many occasions, conflicts are caused by simple misunderstandings among members of the educational community, who leave aside the possibility of dialogue and reaching agreements, and instead resort to shouting, imposition and in some cases, force. This generates situations of aggression that could have been avoided by simply asking for excuses or recognizing the mistakes made.

Regarding the effects of conflicts, it was possible to identify different spheres of affectation, as well as opinions in relation to the treatment given to them. In general, there was a flat rejection of violence in its different meanings, as a consequence of its negative and lasting effects on people. This is evident at the level of discourse; however, in everyday life, these conceptions are not reflected.

Likewise, repeated mention is made of the need for the different institutional authorities (mainly teachers or course directors) to mediate these conflict scenarios so that they do not escalate into more serious situations. Some students have a very deep conception of conflict, to the extent that they identify it as something natural and even necessary in human beings, and therefore it is the task of society to generate strategies to manage it in an adequate manner.

In addition, it is necessary to work on different human values such as companionship and solidarity so that they can be translated into tools in the eventuality or explosion of a conflict. This should be accompanied by reflection exercises that translate the disagreements of each person into opinions expressed with respect and willing to be discussed.

When analyzing the pedagogical strategies aimed at improving school coexistence, the bibliographic review allowed us to find as a common denominator the allusion to the ineffectiveness of the

cultivation of an adequate behavior to solve conflicts based on the mere teaching in a master class. Although it is necessary to have master class scenarios where conceptual and historical aspects are worked on, or the exposition of solution routes, it is also necessary to have training spaces accompanied by physical activity, playfulness and interaction with others. This includes training sessions in informal settings, group workshops, pedagogical games, integration sports matches, etc.

Another activity carried out was the coexistence route, an activity in which, based on the identification of some "stations" necessary to guarantee coexistence, groups were formed to work together on different didactic and playful activities, including puzzles with images alluding to the conflict and the "pool of emotions" where they tried to characterize certain emotions.

From all these elements found, it was possible to configure the proposal of a pedagogical strategy aimed at improving school coexistence of 8th and 9th grade students of an IE of Cereté, taking into account several elements, among them: the need for continuity of the strategy by virtue of the fact that, being formative processes, they require continuous work and constant feedback. This means that at least one hour should be available every two weeks during the school year. This work can be carried out in the spaces designated for group management or work from the cross-cutting components of ethics and values or citizenship skills.

Likewise, the strategy has a magisterial part where the teacher approaches the different concepts and their application in daily life. On the other hand, it has a ludic or sports element, as a consequence of the relevance of this type of activities, since they promote attention and group work by the students. Finally, it is necessary a space of expression on the part of the students, which can involve role playing, activities similar to the pool of emotions or micro workshops of creative writing, painting, weaving, plastic arts or others such as the exquisite corpse activity that consists of a group of people making a sequence of phrases or images without seeing what the person who was before them wrote or drew.

Regarding the first type of activity, since most students seem to have a partially clear essential idea of what a conflict is, as well as its types, causes and consequences, it is not necessary to specify in a technical way what the literature says about it. Instead, it is suggested

to take as a route, the contents of the Truth Commission's Final Report, which includes a series of didactic modules to socialize with the students.

Regarding recreational or sports activities, it is suggested to work alternatively on each of them. That is to say, in one session a sport will be worked on, and in another a role-play and dramatization game. It is important to remember that in the first one, the role of the referee takes precedence, which should be rotated and oriented so that each student can understand the implications of mediating a conflict, as well as the different stations that this entails. Regarding role-playing and dramatizations, it is suggested to have a database where a history of the conflicts that occur most frequently in the institution is recorded so that these can be used as raw material in these activities.

Discussion

As a general conclusion, a comprehensive pedagogical proposal was reached, which also attempts to articulate with the reality of the country as expressed in the final report of the Truth Commission. Additionally, this proposal takes into account that, given the need for continuity of the work, given its formative nature and also given the recognition that the realities of the students will increasingly involve more complex scenarios, it seeks to establish generic guidelines for action so that they can be managed according to the specific conditions of each context and each stage of training.

In relation to the first objective, it is found that, although most students have very close conceptions of conflict and its typologies in relation to what is found in the literature, this does not seem to be sufficient in relation to what happens in practice. That is, reference is made to the fact that it is common to find that people have a broad conceptual background but that the same does not correspond to action. This is a reflection of the need to rethink the different academic scenarios in terms of pedagogical strategies that help to really internalize everything we have as a concept so that the margin of mismatch of this with practice becomes smaller and smaller.

The same happens with the students' conceptions of the causes and effects of conflict, which is what concerns the second specific objective. In most cases, it is possible to identify the core of conflicts

and especially their perennial nature in different life scenarios; however, when confronted with one, all this overflows. In any case, it is very valuable the fact that some students visualize conflict as part of life itself, of school life, which translates into moving the problem from the pretension of living without conflict to the concern for generating a way of life that manages to deal with them in an adequate manner.

Now, with respect to the third specific objective, the different pedagogical strategies analyzed show the need to think of scenarios beyond the lecture, the theoretical, the conceptual and the academic, with a view to an internalization of all these discourses so that they have a real effect in practice. However, this does not mean the elimination of lectures or theoretical spaces; it is necessary that students continue to have a strong contact with them, even more so if they plan to continue with their academic training. Thus, it is necessary to articulate these spaces with other types of activities that also involve collaborative work. This involves games, sports and other scenarios that affect the body and emotions. Additionally, it is necessary to provide spaces that allow students to express themselves at different levels and to know the different channels through which they can do this with a view to feedback their actions in the world through a process of metacognition that allows them to review those sources of overflow in their behavior and thus work to correct them.

In terms of recommendations, taking into account what was mentioned by (Mendoza and Barrera, 2018), it is important that the members of the institution maintain fluid communication with the family of the students as this helps to identify different factors that may influence the generation of conflicts, as well as the eventual ways that may be effective to modulate it or process it at a critical moment. This can be translated, in research terms, into the need to carry out an exercise analogous to the one carried out here with students, but with the family and the educational institution. This would provide a more complete perspective of the elements to be taken into account when developing strategies to deal with and prevent school conflict.

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