DECONSTRUCTING TRUTHS - CULTIVATING POSSIBILITIES: AN INTERNSHIP REPORT ON SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to provide a report on the internship experiences in School Psychology of the Psychology course of Feevale University / RS. The methodology was based on weekly school visits, collective and individual interventions with all the institution's agents, observations on participants, audio and image records and field journal records. The first activity was an icebreaker with all the students of the school. It was called "the chocolate".The second activity took place collectively and promoted reflection on the professional future. The third activity was on "talking about feelings".The fourth activity produced the "garden".The fifth activity was an interaction seeking to identify the flowering points of the "planted" words.The activities aimed to promote other discussions on the need for psychological support or not; destabilizing such certainty and making possible a reality between the binary nature of the healthy and the pathological, a fundamental role for School Psychology.

Keywords: School Psychology; academic failure; psychological intervention.

Desconstruir verdades - cultivando posibilidades: un relato de pasantía en psicología escolar

RESUMEN

En este estudio se tiene la intención de relatar las experiencias de pasantía en Psicología Escolar del curso de Psicología de la Universidad Feevale/RS. La metodología se basó en acompañamientos semanales a la escuela, intervenciones colectivas e individuales con todos los agentes de la institución, observaciones participantes, registros de imagen y audio y registros en diarios de campo. La primera actividad fue un rompe-hielo, realizada con todos los alumnos de la escuela y se llamaba "el chocolate". La segunda actividad sucedió colectivamente y buscaba la reflexión sobre el futuro profesional. La tercera fue sobre "hablar de los sentimientos"; la cuarta buscó producir el "jardín" y la quinta fue una interacción buscando identificar el punto de florecimiento de los elementos sembrados. Las actividades buscaban promover discursos otros acerca de la necesidad o no de un laudo psicológico; desestabilizando tal certeza y tornando posible una realidad entre la binaria del saludable y del patológico, un papel fundamental para la Psicología Escolar.

Palabras clave: Psicología Escolar; fracaso escolar; intervención psicológica.

Desconstruindo verdades - cultivando possibilidades: um relato de estágio em psicologia escolar

RESUMO

Este escrito tem a intenção de relatar as experiências de estágio em Psicologia Escolar do curso de Psicologia da Universidade Feevale/RS. A metodologia baseou-se em acompanhamentos semanais à escola, intervenções coletivas e individuais com todos os agentes da instituição, observações participantes, registros de imagem e áudio e registros em diários de campo. A primeira atividade foi um quebra-gelo, efetivada com todos os alunos da escola e chamava-se "o chocolate". A segunda atividade se deu coletivamente e buscava a reflexão sobre o futuro profissional. A terceira foi sobre "falar dos sentimentos"; a quarta buscou produzir o "jardim" a quinta foi uma interação buscando identificar o ponto de florescimento dos elementos semeados. As atividades buscavam promover discursos outros acerca da necessidade ou não de um laudo psicológico; desestabilizando tal certeza e tornando possível uma realidade entre a binariedade do saudável e do patológico, um papel fundamental para a Psicologia Escolar.

Palavras chave: Cortina literária: uma produção artístico-literária no Ensino Médio.

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INTRODUCTION

This article intends to provide an account of the experiences of internship in school psychology by two under-graduates of the psychology course of the Universidade Feevale/RS in 2014 and 2015. Although the experiences of the two interns happened in two different years, they happened in a processual way with weekly orientation by the same professor and the planned activities shared the same objectives. The methodology was based on weekly visits to the school, collective and individual interventions with all agents in the institution, observations on participants, image and audio records and records from field journals.

According to the records of the first contacts by the school with the psychology service that the university provided to the community, the requests that reached the principal reflected concerns with student failure demonstrated by the low rates of development reached by the school and revealed by the IDEB. Another element present in the principal's complaints and that she considered a fundamental aspect for the interns' practice was a reflection of the social representation psychology assumed for decades within the school environment: attempts at standardization. Thus, with the aggravating factor of the hygienist culture inheritance, which still permeates sectors of the healthcare and education system, her greatest expectation was the possession of psychological assessments in order to be provided with class monitors for specific types of students in an attempt to establish a standard for output and productivity at school (Patto, 1990).

It is important to emphasize that the school is a space for interaction and social development. As a result, it is fundamental for human development, which is made possible by the processes of mediation and by the exchange of experiences that happens by means of relations.Besides school, there are lots of influences on the formation of individuals and such influences might happen in different ways to each individual. Thus, we understand that some of the possible causes for student failure are institutional relations, family matters, economic conditions, geographic conditions and so on.Something that became quite clear is that the student failure discourse, as a government technology (Queiroga, 2005), determined the discourses and the routine of that school.

In this context, truths were created and there was a subjectification of those who were somehow connected to that place. Thus, the field of school psychology, understood here as an instrument for potentialization and prevention that pays attention to economic, political, social, and historical factors while realizing a wide and contextualized intervention, is introduced to the challenge of navigating through this environment and helping promote the development of all actors in the school scenario.

BUILDING THE ROAD

The school was located in a city of the metropolitan region of Porto Alegre/RS, with a little over 22.000 inhabitants. It is a place of essentially German culture and, according to its own inhabitants, used to be prejudiced against people who did not have the physical characteristics of their German ancestry. In addition, it is important to emphasize the geographic location of the institution. It stands on the outskirts of the city and nurtures a relationship of proximity with the poorest village in the municipality. The geographic location is the reason why the children from this village were sent to the school in question. This was the context on which the principal based her explanations not only for student failure but also for indiscipline, for violence, and for the indifference of students and parents regarding the school's reality.

Such discourse not only subjectivized the community. In a special way, it created truths for the teachers and for the principal herself. In view of the circumstances and the cultural precariousness that the principal saw in the families and social contexts of these children, she assumed an almost dictatorial position and made speeches every morning preaching on the ways students and teachers should go in order to become "good people" with "good jobs". It is a perfect example of a definite type of institution, which believes in the adequacy of the population by means of vigilance and correction that no longer occur in panoptic patterns and get updated by means of the observation and judgment of others while searching for the gentleness of bodies (Foucault, 2008), nurturing suspicion and competition among the ones involved.

Among the countless possibilities that the school universe could create especially regarding its role of educators for a life in society and community, the school where the internship was developed prioritized an educational process locked within its own walls. What sense could it make in the education of those children? Which discourses were being reinforced?

We asked ourselves those questions several times. They were the questions that guided our actions inside the school. In this project, particularly, we will describe our attempts to propose other ways to experience the teaching-learning process, childhood, relationships with students, professors, administration, school and community. We also want to promote a reflection on the way the school had been prioritizing the need for a diagnosis on the children's possible learning difficulties in order to attribute failure to just one tip of this iceberg of relations.

Initially, with the help of the teacher and supervisor of the internship, there was a diagnosis process based on the proposal for Institutional Analysis (Baremblitt, 1998). It was possible to notice a generalized difficulty in relationships between teachers and students, between students and administration, and between teachers and administration.After this process, we created an internship plan aligning activities and work proposals.

During the internship, several meetings were realized. Also, there were group activities, individual interviews, visits to students' homes, talks with parents, referrals and other useful devices in the development of actions in school psychology. Now we will describe some of these actions:

The first activity was named "the chocolate" and was realized with the students from the 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th year. Thus, all students from morning classes took part (in the afternoon, the school focused on initial years). Such strategy was only possible because it was a small elementary school of small proportions. Our intention was to work on the necessity for connection and cooperation throughout the school years as well as other social relations.However, it is important to emphasize that, at the time it was not possible to reach all objectives. The groups highlighted the importance of family, of all components of the school and also the importance of appreciating the students capacities.

The second activity was a process of "professional reflection". It was realized with the students of the 6th and 9th years, a total number of 18 students. These were the groups in which the teachers had the most difficulty for interaction and where the levels of aggressiveness were high and students constantly missed class or just dropped out. The primary intention was to promote a reflection on professional possibilities without any pre-established patterns, any expectations, or any other prior intention. The only objective was to get to know their expectations concerning the future. The participation of the students surprised the teachers who were present. It was a moment for sharing expectations, for producing new motivational discourses, for empowerment and cooperation. However, another value was added to this encounter. It was related to the new way teachers started looking at the students. They never suspected they had any expectations concerning their professional careers. We reflected on the way we see our students and on the insufficient space provided for reflections on their professional future.

The third activity, named "O Cultivo" or "The Cultivation", was realized with all teachers and students from morning classes. The main objective was to rescue the feelings and attitudes that were not present in the school environment. Each participant was provided with a sheet of paper and a pen. They were asked to write down feelings that should be cultivated such as,

safety, happiness, respect, love, tranquility, dialogue, organization, common sense, flexibility, communication, ethics and so on. After collecting the papers, no identification required, we discussed the reasons why such words were mentioned.

As a result, a fourth activity was suggested: the creation of a Garden. All those involved in the school environment helped choose a place for the garden. Colorful flowers were planted and the words mentioned in the previous activity were written on small wooden placards placed among the plants in order to be seen by those who walked around the garden.

The fifth and last activity was realized only with the teachers and the administration (11 people). It happened took weeks before the end of the participation of the interns at the school and intended to rescue some discussions the group had gone through. We got started by reconsidering the words that had been "planted" in the Garden. Participants were asked to identify the "flowering" point of each one. Since the meeting happened in a classroom, a large panel was pinned on the whiteboard in front of the participants. This panel depicted a tree with roots, trunk, branches, leaves, and flowers. Teachers were asked to draw a word and place it on the tree while explaining their reasons for placing it in that position. Everyone participated and, besides pointing at difficulties in a clear, lucid way, participants enriched the discussion by presenting positive aspects of their colleagues, which strengthened their connection and sense of belonging to a collectiveness. This could not have been predicted in the beginning of the project when meetings usually ended up in accusations and embarrassment.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

These pages are not enough to describe two years of doubts, fears, and mistakes as well as tireless orientations, and mutual support leading to right decisions and developments. It is possible to notice important movements happening in connection with the presence of the school psychologist. Some of the fundamental elements are the connection created among teachers, the strengthening of a relationship of trust between administration and teachers, and the possibilities that the whole school community started to see for the students. We believe that our greatest contribution to all those involved in the described context was the promotion of different notions concerning the need for psychological support or not. It was possible to better understand the binary nature of the healthy and the pathological. By nurturing students' capacities while taking into consideration their peculiarities, individualities, and the weight of their social realities, the principal not only found solutions for her initial complaints. She also discovered new routes for the teaching-learning process.

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