Resilience and Psychomotricity: Strategies of Action in Preschool Education

Maria de Lourdes Cró, College of Education, Polytechnic Institution of Coimbra, Coimbra, Portugal
Ana Mafalda Castro Pinho, University of Coimbra, Coimbra, Portugal

ABSTRACT

With this article the authors would like to deepen the resilience and psychomotricity as action strategies in preschool education. They analyse too the importance of resilience and psychomotricity and their impact in the learning of disadvantaged children at a preschool age that are exposed to adverse social and personal factors and to assess the efficiency of an intervention program based in psychomotricity and resilience together. The authors developed a project in a region of Brazil (Botucatu), where a Psychological Development Activation Model was used with psychomotricity exercises and also the Programme Strong Start Pre K, in the area of resilience. The assessment instruments used were the WeBeST test for resilience and the Operational Portage Inventory test for Psychomotricity. The results indicate that there was an evolution in resilience among children in the group that participate in this program. They improved the resilience capacity, dealing with problems and controlling the emotions.

KEYWORDS
Development, Educational Intervention, Preschool Education, Programmes, Psychomotricity, Resilience, Strategies

INTRODUCTION

Personal, social and emotional skills like anxiety, fear, insecurity, aggressiveness, emotional barriers, bullying, rage, joy, surprise and sadness are a part of our daily life from childhood to adulthood. From the tenderest age we can learn how to deal with our own emotions and those of others, see the world from different points of view, which may help improve our quality of life, health, personal and professional success, which is one of the challenges of the 21st Century. It is a fact that the development of social-emotional skills combined with cognitive development is the key to success in school and throughout life, as shown in Emotional Intelligence (Queirós, 2014; Goleman, 2010; Damásio, 2011).

According to Motta & Aguiar (2007) being competent is having the capacity to apply skills, knowledge and behaviour. The ability to use knowledge to achieve a purpose, the capacity of using knowledge and skills acquired in one’s profession and the capacity to mobilise knowledge such as know-how, know how to be and know how to act, and lastly, the capacity to solve problems. A personal skill is an integrated and structured knowledge that an individual will have to resort to and uses in order to effectively undertake various tasks encountered throughout life, while being aware of their potential and resources as well as psychological constraints in order to be able to pursue projects in various dimensions of their existence.

It is common knowledge that emotions affect how and what we learn, that affectionate relationships are the basis for lasting education and that important skills can be taught simultaneously with the academic content. Many researches show that the positive effects achieved through the development of these social skills in academic context can benefit the health of the body, improve self-image, self-concept and self-esteem, and provide physical and mental well-being and responsible citizenship. In
order to achieve success throughout life, it is essential to reduce the risk of poor adjustment, failed relationships, interpersonal violence, substance abuse and unhappiness (Elias et al., 1977; Zins et al., 2004).

For the World Health Organisation (WHO), health is not merely the absence of illness but a resource of our daily lives and the state of physical, psychological and social well-being of the human being. Barbosa et al. (2002) reports that psychomotricity is directly related to education, health and well-being, which help to achieve a complete balance of the human being, and has the objective of promoting integral development.

RESILIENCE: DIFFERENT APPROACHES

The term resilience is not a fixed attitude that changes according to the stage of life and circumstances, type of trauma and how a person experiences it as well as the historical-cultural factors (Hensius, 2010). It is a dynamic process, a symbiosis between the individual’s inside and outside, in a social context, resulting from the interaction of various micro-systems (family, school, friends) and macro-systems (community, beliefs, ideologies, values and customs, means of communication, economic situation and educational system), from the perspective of the bio ecological Human Development Model by Bronfenbrenner (1998). Resilience leads to a metamorphosis of the individual, who learns through experiences lived and draws life lessons for life.

According to Boyd (2011), resilience is the opposite of vulnerability. Resilience refers to a set of factors that the child has (or its environment) that offer some protection against the effects of vulnerabilities, which means that a highly vulnerable child integrated in a poor or unfavorable environment can produce more adverse effects. However, an integrated resilient child in a poor environment can have good performance, since it is given the possibility to discover and enjoy many stimulating opportunities. In the case of a vulnerable child, surrounded by a good environment, can also have good performance, especially when child is helped to deal with their vulnerabilities.

Regalla, Guilherme & Serra-Pinheiro (2007) adds that resilience should not be seen as a fixed attribute of the individual, so that if the circumstances relating to that person can change, the resilience changes too. Resilience happen precisely from protection processes that encompass four main functions, namely: reduce the impact of hazards; reduce the negative chain reactions, which follow the individual’s exposure to risk; establish and maintain self-esteem and self-efficacy, through secure attachment relations and compliance of tasks successfully and ultimately create opportunities to reverse the effects of stress. According to Barbosa (2006) resilience results from the interaction between seven factors: management of emotions, impulse control, empathy, optimism, causal analysis, self-efficacy and reach of people. The author in analysis argues that such factors when grouped provide overcoming adversity, related to the meaning of life, the very individual and his next, and it is this assemblage that allows the development of emotional maturity. The first fact approached by Barbosa (2006) includes the ability of the subject to remain calm before a stressful situation by redirecting its behavior. The impulse control relates directly to emotion regulation, the subject experiences the situation in an enhanced and/or inhibiting manner. The third factor relates to the empathy, to the author, this is the ability that the human being has to understand the psychological state of the others by decoding non-verbal information. The author in question reveals that optimism, is a belief of the individual who determines that things can change for the better, and there is the belief that you can control the future, even when the power of decision is not yours. Through the causal analysis, the fifth factor described by Barbosa (2006), the individual recognize with precision the causes of problems and adversity in the environment, putting themselves in a safe situation and not at risk.
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