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Schools in 2010: Successful, happy, healthy, responsible, autonomous and participative Children

Between the ages of 5 and 18, at least, most of the children and adolescent's time and energy is spent at school or in school related matters..

However, the Portuguese children and young people suffer from a chronic and not yet fully solved school failure problem, highlighted in various international studies as the PISA and HBSC / WHO.

The **Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychology** begins with a special issue on School (on school age), in which a group of Portuguese and foreign authors, who have studied this age group, were put together.

The family, school and friends are identified in several studies as relevant contexts in life, well being and health of school-aged children and adolescents.

During the last years, an evolution path was defined, and described below:

- 1) From remediation intervention programs to preventive and promotional intervention programs;
- 2) from programs with a specific focus on the reduction of specific problems, to programs integrating various aspects of the lives of children and adolescents;
- 3) a special focus on personal and social growth, well-being and competence acquisition;
- 4) a special appeal to young people's active participation and to the inclusion of all actors of their relational universe.

Today we review concepts such as the school's role in students' well-being and health, in learning how to manage interpersonal relationships and prevent violence, the importance of social capital (family, friends, teachers, neighbours), in the well-being of young people – the access to social support and search for it in case of problems.

In addition to social factors, we also speak of personal factors and social skills: identifying and managing emotions, self-regulation of perceived emotional states, identification and management of problems and conflicts, but also of

interpersonal communication and positive affirmation of the self, construction (and re-construction) of positive expectations in the past, present and future.

We talk about the perception of quality of life and the role of personal and social factors in the recognition and maintenance of the perception of quality of life. We talk about the participation of children and young people in building and maintaining their perception of quality of life, welfare and health.

Recently, concepts have emerged that reflect a new phase in the modern path of youth Education. These concepts often appear in the English language, which is a future challenge for Portuguese researchers.

We highlight concepts such as social capital (exclusive relationships of “bonding” and more extensive “bridging” relationships), the “health assets” (personal and creative resources for health), social competence, resilience, self-regulation, management of emotions, “empowerment”, “savouring and self-praising” (stopping to enjoy/savour and get self-rewarded), identify and develop “sparks” (personal success regarding individual, special and unique issues), set a course and objectives and enter into “thriving” (prosperous and healthy personal and social development).

We are still talking about school, or rather about school aged youth!, how the younger people, their parents and teachers can talk among themselves to achieve a better future.

Prof.^a Dr.^a *Margarida Gaspar de Matos* ,
Guest editor; for the Special issue: At School
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