

## Confidence in the classroom as the transformer axis of the school world\*

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### Abstract

#### Confidence in the classroom as the transformer axis of the school world

A research performed by the Municipal Secretary of Education of Armenia city, showed difficulty levels regarding confidence and treatment at the school. From these results, the School of Management and Educative Development –EGIDA (Spanish abbreviation), took these two variables in order to explore the status of confidence and interpersonal treatment in grades with a single teacher, in grades with a teacher per area, and at the family scope, to create processes of reflection and alternatives in order to change the classroom dynamics. Findings from the research performed by the School of Pedagogy of La Gran Colombia University, Armenia Branch, show that regarding confidence, both, in grades with a teacher, and in grades with a teacher per area, and in the family environment, there is no construction of solid means of confidence and good treatment, which are fundamental aspects to build pedagogic dynamics leading to healthy learning processes; for such purpose a guidance exercise was performed at some schools in order to propose and discover routes for confidence construction and change teacher treatment toward students, expecting a positive impact at school environment, classroom cooperation, the students will of remaining at the classroom, and learning conditions.

Everything results from the current urgent need of making from education an event which positively impacts individual life and social of the students; it supposes understanding that the same life is a human event, which fundamental center is construction of human dialogue, as a creator of confidence networks, re-enchantment alternatives of the classroom, parting from a meaningful cohabitation, which leads to strengthen learning, which no doubt, will result in a transformed and transformer society, deeply human and solidary. In this manner, a sincere stake is opened for construction of confidence at the classroom, and the fraternal human gesture, which is expected to become an enormous and undeferable opportunity to re-enchant the classroom for a different social order.

**Key words:** Classroom, confidence, education, transformation, interpersonal relationship.

\*Article resulting from the Research on confidence and treatment to students in grades with unique teachers, and teachers per area at the schools of Los Quindos, Bosques de Pinares and Ciudadela Sur, within Paideia group of La Gran Colombia University, Armenia Branch –UGCA.

## Introduction

The School of Management and Educative Development –EGIDA, (Spanish abbreviation), of La Gran Colombia University-UGCA, Armenia Branch, supports its research efforts on social pedagogy, in terms of recognition of the other, his conditions, needs and life expectations, promoting an education for respect, recognition, cooperation, where better citizens are educated for cohabitation and peace, which, beyond proposing a discussion on the possibility of education as a science or as a convergence point of several sciences, makes a human stake which leads to a critical, including, and proposing view, as possibilities for a true school cohabitation based on respect and solidarity.

Bearing the above issues in mind, and taking as a reference the research carried out by the Municipal Secretary of Education of Armenia city, to characterize the main school cohabitation problems, and from which work, two variables of analysis are considered: confidence, and treatment in teacher-student relationship, served as the basis for the research prepared by the School of Pedagogy and Educative Research of La Gran Colombia University, Armenia Branch, which made a closer view in order to understand confidence and treatment in grades with a single teacher, and in grades with a teacher per area, which work is performed at the classroom scenario, and in family scenarios as well, which in fact is, an extension of what happens at the classroom.

In this manner, the investigation gathered in this article parts from the question: ¿what are the conditions of the teacher's human expression to build a classroom of confidence, cohabitation, and learning? It is a starting point which reveals the fundamental thing of the teacher job as a transformer of the school world, within the classroom micro-world, assuming himself as a promoter of amiable environments and confidence, where the necessary and fundamental competences may be deployed, to assume life and the society from a coherent and deserving human condition. It is not only a stake for learning, but, overall, a stake for man.

Everything means not only a change of how teachers approach educative experiences, but also, a change in their vital condition as a teacher, in order to provide the students with integral education and in agreement with present and future times. Working

in construction of confidence at the classroom will be a possible path to an education with a transformer meaning.

Results of this research, as it will be seen, reveal that, in spite of efforts made, the classroom continues to be a place of human fragileness, absence of confidence, and non-desired human relationships, which situations surge within the family context as well, evidencing lack of commitment to human formation, and citizen formation of children.

## Materials and methods

The research was qualitative and inductive, based on data collection, through administration of three workshops at referenced education institutions, in grades thirds and fifths, each with a single teacher, and in grades fifths and sixths with teachers per area. The workshops were: (See annex 1)

- Workshop one: Living confidence: through which it is explored the dynamics of confidence building, and treatment at the classroom, and at family context.
- Workshop two: ¿How would you like to be treated?, ¿what is the individual you trust the most? This workshop provides an approach to treatment needs expressed by the children, and classification of individuals composing the circle of confidence.
- Workshop three: the dreamed school: an un-concluded tale is presented, to be completed by the children, and to explore expectations of the dreamed school.

The target population of the study was located at Bosques de Pinares school, Ciudadela de Sur school, and los Quindos school (Policarpa Salavarrieta), in grades 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup>, with a single teacher, and teachers per area.

The focus group was composed of 80 boys and girls or grades 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, with a single teacher per grade, between 8 and 12 years age, 45 boys and girls of grades 6<sup>th</sup>, with teachers per area, aging between 11 and 13 years.

## Confidence at the classroom as a transformer axis of the school world

*[...] the school is that torn and glad look, the path we take in our hands, and sweetly keep it between sobs and laughs" (...) "it is site where looks cross between oblique lines, between horizons which open in the evening or at the end of a test. The school is going through gold stones and closed windows, where darkness falls from tombs of knowledge, to allow certainties of ignorance. It is the look of the other who falls with time and becomes friendly" ... (Zambrano, 2005).*

Approaching the topic of confidence as the transformer axis of the school world, involves to understand the need of re-thinking current man from a look which implies his condition of humanity and his human condition.

This consideration shows the need of approaching the reflection from a humanist approach within the educative context, and for such purpose, it will be necessary to recover Paulo Freire's thought, his pedagogic – humanist stake, which invites to accept a liberator education within a chaotic world which has distorted the sense of dignity, and civility thus affecting present condition of so many children and young individuals having lost their sense of life and society. Perhaps a thought that will find a reflexive niche in Carlos Skliar, Magaldy Tellez and Jorge Larrosa's designs.

The topic of school cohabitation is overall, a problem that concerns all of us, especially teachers and relatives, dependable of formation of citizens at the fullest sense of the word, men and women for a fair and fraternal society, where cohabitation and cooperation become peace guarantors, and democracy promoters, within a fragmented world, and signed by an enormous social indifference, increasing in this manner, a entanglement of conflicts which seem endless.

Within this research, it is proposed to recover the teacher role as a promoter of amiable and confidence environments, and also recover the family as a fundamental place of the society, by making it possible for these two formation scenarios retake convictions, actions and challenges in order to make possible a different society. Certainly, parents and teachers are the ones formers of new citizens, formers of men and women who need to grow believing in a better and possible world. For such purpose, it is necessary for parents and teachers to give themselves the opportunity for a change of how to be in front of

the other, in order to consolidate an integral education, which are the basis of life relationships that should be empowered in terms of civility and human condition.

The need of convoking confidence and respectful treatment, both at the classroom and at home, surges from such little encouraging results expressed in the research which faces us to a critical situation, both at school environment and family, which need of great and possible transformations, if we want to transform the society.

## Results

In terms of findings, it meaningfully draws the attention the fact that in education environments with single teachers, that is, with teachers who accompany all year round the school process of children, just 2% of the population expressed to hold a confidence link with the teacher, which situation is repeated at home environment, where confidence toward parents ranks between 5% and 10%, as shown by graphics 1 and 2, of the readings performed.

**Graphic 1.** Confidence at the classroom with a single teacher (next page)

**Graphic 2.** Confidence at home, in grades with a single teacher (next page)

The above resulted to be a particularly astonishing data, because, at supposing a permanent presence of a teacher along the year, it would be expected a meaningful confidence link which would lead children to find a niche for dialogue and opening.

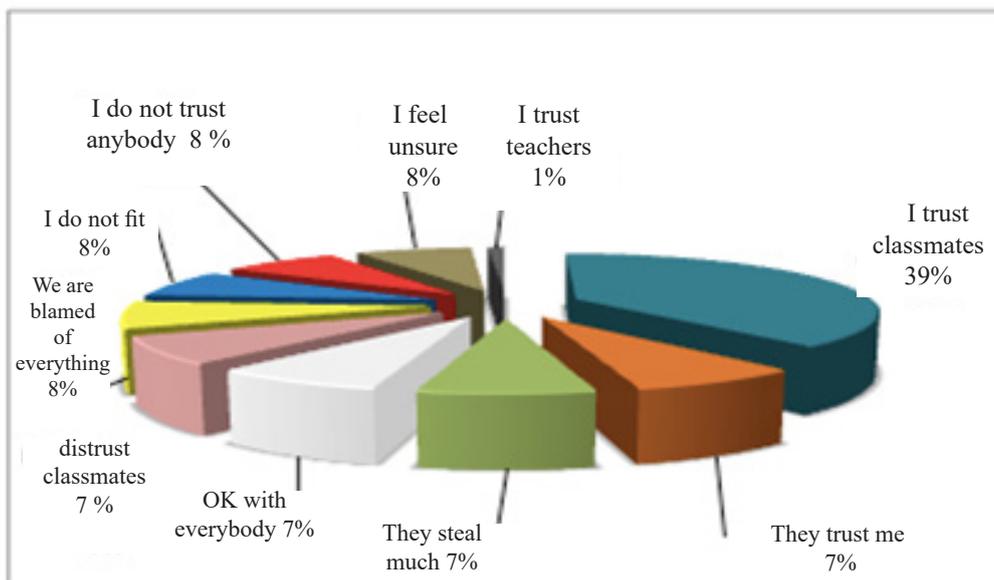
This trend is also evidenced in grades with teachers per area, that is, grades taught by several teachers according to the number of established courses. At these groups confidence on teachers is absent. In the family context, it is between 1% and 10%, as shown by graphics 3 and 4, below.

**Graphic 3.** Confidence in class with a teacher per area (next page)

**Graphic 4.** Confidence in class with a teacher per area (next page)

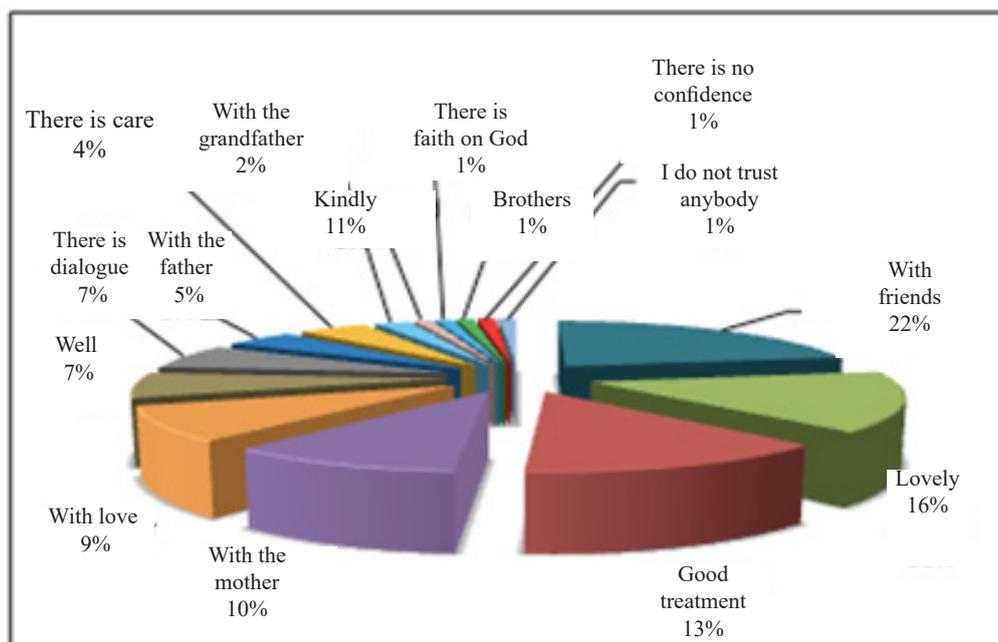
Something to highlight in the two scenarios of action, is that when asked about confidence at home, the questioned individuals express a series of favorable conditions such as good treatment, love and respect; however, it seems that they are not considered as fundamental conditions for construction of confidence environment at home.

**Graphic 1.** Confidence at the classroom with a single teacher



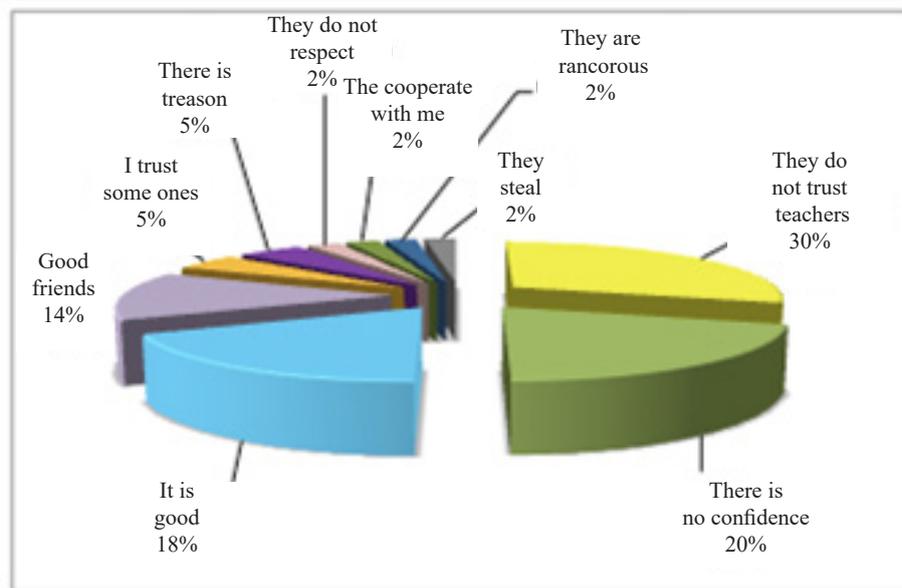
Source: Research report on school cohabitation (EGIDA).

**Graphic 2.** Confidence at home, in grades with a single teacher



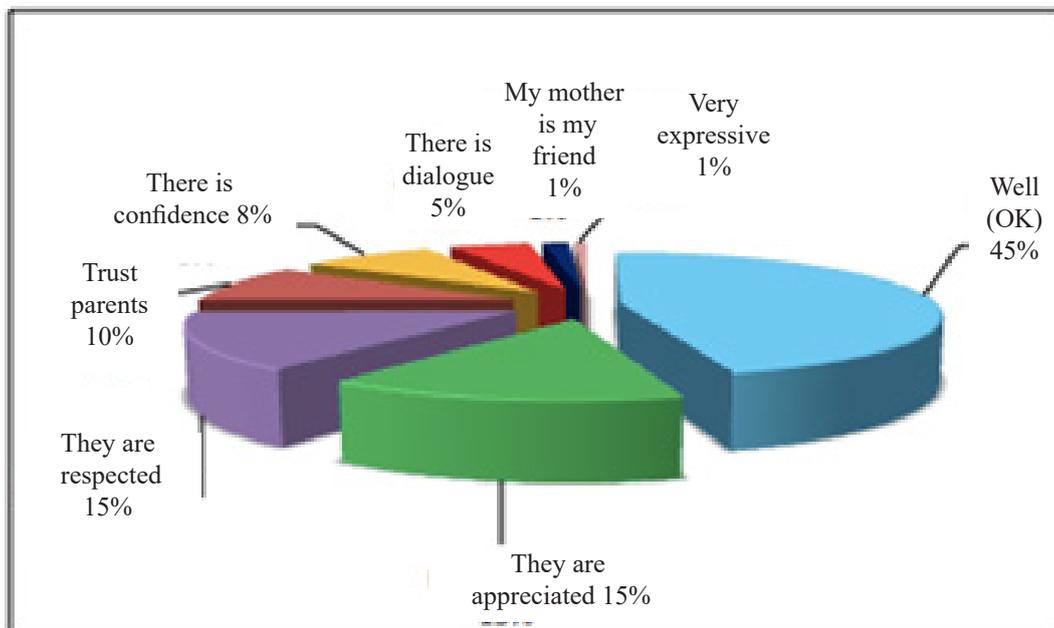
Source: Research report on school cohabitation (EGIDA).

**Graphic 3.** Confidence in class with a teacher per area



Source: Research report on school cohabitation (EGIDA).

**Graphic 4.** Confidence in class with a teacher per area



Source: Research report on school cohabitation (EGIDA).

Another aspect of a necessary consideration, is that the circle of confidence of these children is built with friends at the school, and with neighbor friends, but not with individuals who the education event meaningfully depends on. This is a concerning issue because from such circle of confidence favorable routes of education are not always transited, but, unfortunately, such circle ends dragging children and young individuals toward lamentable situations of life.

This reading evidenced an extremely fragile floor, since confidence is the fundamental pillar for cohabitation, which in turn becomes the motor that could deploy affective and cognitive competences, and therefore, urgent transformation are necessary to be made in order to recover confidence, for which purpose it is fundamental the life testimony both from parents (or their delegates), and teachers; Albert Einstein was right at claiming: “Example is not one of the many manners of teaching, but the unique one”. Therefore, parents and teachers have to be aware of their huge responsibility to their children and students, not only in terms of present, but in terms of future generations.

From this perspective, committed and possible stakes are urgent, which lead to re-build man from the school and family scenario, for which purpose recuperation and re-conquer of confidence play a fundamental role as they facilitate a human encounter, transformer and meaningful for children and young individuals of contemporary society.

Now, in order to find the appropriate routes to configure these stakes from research, confidence was assumed from its basic meaning, that is, as the faith toward the other, a reciprocal faith that surges from the conviction that what is done is for reciprocal good. In this sense, confidence supposes a high degree of change, dedication and opening from a deeply sincere act.

For such purpose, the classroom considered as a place of life which encourages learning, as Zambrano claims, this should be the place for gladness, and enjoyment on which pedagogy supports to facilitate the relationship with the other (Zambrano, 2005). The classroom confidence precisely becomes the key space to develop life conditions which make it possible transformations of human condition of the students, and from them to their family contexts.

An interpretation is being made of the context which recognizes the critical situation of the family, which was always an unreplaceable allied of education and formation, today requires to be re-educated in order to recover its fundamental place in historical comprehension of the society, and on strategic basis, our students, the children of those families will be the ones holding the unpostponable possibility and opportunity to recover the meaning of family, and they may do so, provided that the education institutions prepare them from a human and citizen condition, based on credibility, conviction and confidence on the institutionality recognized as the one seek reciprocal benefit.

Therefore, for a social transformation to occur, parting from life experience at the classroom, it is imperative to create safe and confident environments, where our children and young individuals may deploy those necessary competences to cohabit and create their own environment, and for which purpose their own learning will become the guarantee to achieve it. Working in construction of confidence at the classroom should be the main essence of its nature, the highest historical concern being sure that everything what is expected will come by addition.

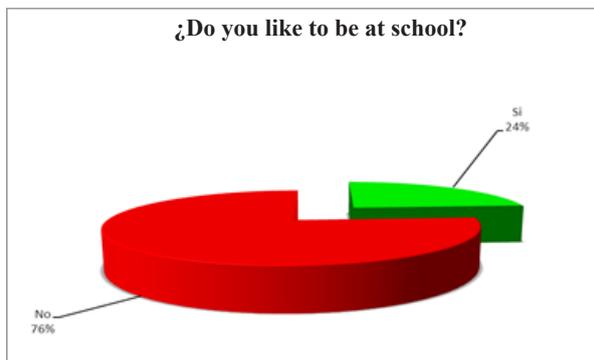
Confidence at the classroom should be a two-way process between students and teacher, where difference are recognized, and the highest degree of empathy and reciprocal dedication are expressed, and for such purpose it is necessary to overcome the idea of an epidermal teacher, who, notwithstanding being academically successful, would be successful if proper environment were achieved at the classroom parting from everything which makes human existence great. In this sense, the teacher, educator, as Freire calls him, should be an artist, because the educator remakes the world, redesign, repaint and re-enchant it, and therefore he should be sensible, that is an aesthete. (Freire, 1994).

This look at the teacher becomes a fundamental reference to understand the image of the teacher, necessary to think the educative event as the key of vital and citizen transformations. In fact, this implies to overcome those ankylosed schemes that for always have moved education within accumulation of knowledge, expressed as the perpetuator of an education that is not touching man, therefore he has lost confidence in it. Academic results are not the ones which will account for security of a quality education, but the reflex of society that respects, appreciates and promotes itself, for which purpose skills are vital, that is, it is

not only the urgency for knowledge, but the urgency for man and the society.

Likewise, it implies rethinking the teacher role on these times of school disenchantment and social uncertainty. Certainly, the teacher plays an important role in re-enchanting the classroom, in the way of inhabiting and living it, overcoming through these actions the desire of absence that surrounds expectations of children and young individuals at education institutions, which situation was evidenced along the research, in which, before the question about their will to be at the school, 76% answered negatively, while 24% admitted their will to remain at the school, as shown in graphic 5 below.

Graphic 5. Desire of being at the school.



Source: Report of research on school cohabitation. (EGIDA)

It is clear that the most meaningful challenges of education are centered in the need of creating life conditions that involve and commit our students in this social and historical project, a fundamental condition for other efforts related to learning processes to succeed.

It is necessary to rebuild from the classroom, new scenarios of confidence as the fundamental pillar of cohabitation and an integral human development, create new ways of being and performing at the school world (Skliar and Tellez, 2008). This urgency calls for the teacher presence as an educator human subject but not as an educative official. These new ways of being and performing at the school world are the way to conquer an educative scenario as the place transformer of life which bets for life and everything what it means.

In this manner, the school, and specially the classroom becomes a privileged space of socialization, where students are not only taught, but fundamentally men and women are educated who will received from leaving generations the torch of a society that may not remain in the dark; and, for such purpose, it is necessary to count on teachers committed to the social cause, humanist teachers, sensible, and open to the other. But certainly, this is not only the job of a teacher at the classroom, it is necessary that educative agencies, both state and private, although it sounds paradoxical and repulsive, should seriously assume everything which implies education, and change from an operating speech into a speech of life, if what is wanted is honestly bet for history of good men and women, who will become the social rebuilders of the family and managers of a new civilization.

On the bottom of this social and historical project is the urgency of educative re-enchantment, which implies restatement of education as an event which involves a human meaning, that leads to make of education a place of life and social hope, which implies to regard education as a thought perceived in development of the transformer action (Freire, 2009). That is, in daily life in vital relationship with the other. This is a posture which separates from neutrality, because both the art and the educative act make it impossible (Freire, 2000), it is separated from a deep passiveness and from hopelessness in which education as fallen. The art and the redimensioned and re-enchanting educative act, is an emancipating event from the many ways of negation of the other as a historical subject. In Freire's thought, and in philosophy of education, it is fundamental for man to be aware of his own existence, in this manner he may understand his condition as an individual, and the ability to contextualize his existence in a link with others. Thus, at assuming "education as practice of freedom" it would be recovering for education its fundamental meaning in the ideal of educating for a human society.

This is an important stake from education, and also from other instances that should take seriously the meaning of future of our peoples, Freire (2009) is right at claiming, if it is true that citizenship is not built just through education, it is also true that without it, citizen is not built. It is an ideal which bears a special meaning from the educative act. Construction of an active, alive, and conscious citizenship, from configuration of a historical subject, is promoted through a marked intentionality of education.

Therefore, education may not be ignored as an event that leads to advance toward these ideals. Education calls for a special re-enchantment for our children and young individuals to become willing and committed to fervently love and live it; this is the first step to achieve construction of a human and social civility.

Re-enchanting education is not to inject new methods, new paradigms, but to live it with a sign of humanity which recovers the human sense of the other, parting from the experience of vital encounter found at the classroom.

This urgent purpose of re-enchanting education, likewise requires re-enchantment of a vital subject in a condition of teacher, holding in his hands and in his spirit the enormous responsibility of managing the educative world with a sign of enjoyment of his role as such.

For such purpose, Freire (1994), in a *letter to whom intends to teach* proposes some traits which lead to understand the teacher from a political and human posture, making of education an encounter of life and meaning.

Freire highlights in a first instance the ethical and political responsibility of the teacher. The teacher is not improvised, the teacher should be a subject prepared to live his critical role, he should be creator and recuperator. His word, his existence should explain that thing which inspires love in the other, who questions, moves, amazes the other, then, dialogue at the classroom is not only an act of transmission of knowledge, but an act of restatement, search, of critic, from which it is possible to recover the historical condition of the students.

Other key aspect of Freire's reading is to highlight the educative fact as a sign of freedom which supposes overcoming the ties which prevent it from being transformer. In addition, it is important to understand that education is not a shelter; accessing education is an enormous privilege that should be experienced each day with the cheer of the first day.

Educating is also, from Freire's view, empowering fundamental capabilities, which make the teacher a transformer subject.

Also, the *Letter to whom intends to teach*, emphasizes on coherence between the teacher speech and his acts. The teacher should be a readable sign of what he expresses through his voice. The impact and his sense of being at the classroom relies on this fact.

Freire also stresses about the dialogue capacity with the other; the teacher does not speak *to* the other, but *with* the other, that is, he established a binding relationship, not epidemic, which supposes to listen to, learn, and understand the other, which becomes the essence of education.

“The unique way of educating of by loving” (Words of one of the last interviews to Freire). Although this sounds romantic, we certainly find in love a special allied, if we understand that education is an encounter of life:

An act of love between teacher and student; as a shining mirror, it is an ethic experience, I exist to improve the life of the other, I learn from him, he learns from me. Being teacher is an endless passion, it is my rejuvenation. (Larrosa & Skliar, 2009: 25).

## Discussion of results

The foregoing information shows that, before the question ¿What are the conditions of human expression of the teacher to build a classroom of confidence, cohabitation, and learning?, as starting point, which evidences the fundamental of the teacher job as a transformer of the school world at the classroom micro-world, to evidence that:

### In grades with unique teacher

#### a) School context

Confidence in these grades is linked to friendship among children, however, there are traits of mistrust and displeasure in relationships associated to mistreatment behavior, and physical aggression, or improper treatment, such as gibes, nicknames, found in the analysis of results.

It is important to mention that in lower percentage, there are expressions of respect, which may become a great tool for construction of new ways of interaction.

In this view on the school context it becomes concerning the fact that teachers do not show any protagonist role in construction of confidence, which locates the teacher in minimal percentages in front of the confidence circle of children, and in some date he is absent.

In the exploration performed it surges as need of children, improvement of the school infrastructure to have a good time, and in lower percentages, the need of a school as a place for friendship, respect and good treatment.

#### b) Family context

It draws the attention that in the family ambit, confidence is not placed in a first instance on parents, but on friends, that is, it is an experience which finds better meaning on the street. Notwithstanding, it is important to mention that such little confidence located in the family context, is placed on the mother, which may become a strategic point to recover family confidence.

Results show traits of mistreatment, reprimands, lack of valuation and family violence, which may meaningfully affect children behavior at the school.

In spite of this dark panorama, it is important to stress that, although in lower percentage, at the family ambit there are gestures of good treatment, love, dialogue, and respect.

#### c) Expected treatment

It is interesting to see how children claim good treatment, a respectful relationship, with no insults, but with love; and something that draws the attention, is the need of being recognized, and valued as individuals.

#### d) Persons children trust the most

In this exercise, it surges again that confidence is placed on the street, on friends, followed by the mother, and father, or other members of the family. Within this reading, it is important to stress that among the individuals of major confidence of children, the teachers are not included; this fact draws the attention, in particular, in grades with unique teachers, who a better confidence would be expected from, since such teachers are present all academic year round.

### In grades with teachers per areas

#### a) School context

Results in grades with teachers per areas are not far from those obtained for grades with unique teachers. The same trends are seen in both instances.

Results express a meaningful absence of confidence, being concerning the fact that a high percentage of students, stated since the beginning that they do not trust their teachers. However, it is worth to mention that in a minimal percentage there is a change to recover relationships based on respect and appreciation.

In this group of work also surges the need of improving school facilities; students claim more commitment by teachers, students expect more kindness, and affection from teachers, and that their classes are properly explained and dynamic.

In minimal percentages the need surges that schools should be a place for friendship, with much respect, love, and a lot of culture.

#### b) Family context

The family context shows respectful, loving, and careful treatment, and with dialogue; mistreatment is lower percentages.

#### c) Expected treatment

Children expect to be treated with respect, love and tolerance, with no insults or discrimination. They also show the need of being recognized, valued and taken into account, both at school and at home.

#### d) Persons trusted the most

Confidence levels up down, are placed on brothers, friends, mother, father, grandparents, uncles, and cousins. Teacher absence from this ranking is concerning.

### Conclusions

In general terms, it is worth to stress that both, in children of grades with unique teacher and with teacher per area, there is absence of parents and teachers in their circle of confidence. That confidence is placed on school friends and home boundary friends, that is, it out of formation patterns and students are exposed to other life approaches that may negatively impact, preventing that affection treatment which may be given by parents and teachers from being considered as an event that lead to build confidence.

Likewise, there are favorable and respectful treatment both at the classroom and at home, which would be strategically fundamental to promote respect, recognition and valuation of the other. It would be proper to strengthen the need of considering the school as a space for friendship, to be experience with much respect, love, and a lot of culture.

Likewise, it is seen that children expect to be treated with a lot of respect, live, tolerance, with no insults, or discrimination; and in this population also surges the need of being recognized, valued, and taken into account, both at school and at home.

## Recommendations

Regarding these conclusions referring to a school and family scenario, with improper issues regarding confidence and interpersonal treatment, it becomes a fundamental challenge to produce actions which lead to empower, both at the classroom and at home, those expressions of valuation and respect which are the central axis of confidence and conquer of a human and respectful treatment. For such purpose, it is fundamental to recognize and encourage positive traits surged from the research which connect us to favorable expressions of confidence and proper treatment. It is key to take these experiences to empower them, and advance in transformation of those matters which adversely affect school and family cohabitation.

Producing formation actions aimed at teachers, children and parents will be a necessary contribution to advance in construction of genuine solidary culture within the education community.

Below are some strategies, as an example, resulted from this research, in order to promote gestures of respect, recognition and affection, as a dynamic which leads to build scenarios of confidence. Application of these strategies involves students, teachers, parents, and school environment. Thus, strategies are directed as follows:

- a) Classroom strategies for construction of confidence: where it is proposed to develop activities which promote cohabitation, strengthening dynamics regarding respect, affection, and recognition.
- b) Strategies to create amiable environment at common spaces: performance of activities which positively impact everybody, taking advantage of leisure time, institutional activities, among other.
- c) Strategies to strengthen the educative sense of the family: These strategies are particularly oriented to promote children ties with their mothers, since in the research, mothers are regarded as the main companion of their children in performing their school activities.

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