

The Fundamentals of Child Education from the Humanistic Approach : A Brief Overview

وصف موجز لأساسيات تربية الطفل وفقاً للمنهج الإنساني

Brève description des fondamentaux de l'éducation de l'enfant selon l'approche humaniste

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ملخص:

من خلال منظور علم النفس البيداغوجي للعلاقات الشخصية (PRH)، يفحص هذا المقال أساسيات تعليم الأطفال. نبدأ بالنظر في الأطر الضمنية أو الصريحة التي يطبقها المعلمون والآباء بشكل متكرر على فكرة التعليم، ثم يتم استكشاف وجهة نظر PRH حول ما يعنيه حقاً تعليم الطفل، مع التركيز على السلوكيات والمواقف التي تلي أفضل احتياجات الطفل الأساسية للتطور. نحن نركز على موضوعين رئيسيين: الحاجة إلى الاعتراف والتقدير التي تعتبرها مدرسة PRH الأهم على الإطلاق، و ظاهرة جرح عدم تحقيق الذات عند الطفل، الذي يشكل تهديداً خطيراً لقدرة على النمو والتطور الشخصي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الطفل ؛ الطفولة؛ التربية؛ الاحتياجات؛ التطلعات.

Abstract :

Through the prism of PRH (Personality and Human Relations) psychopedagogy, this article examines the fundamentals of child education. We start by looking at the implicit or explicit frameworks that educators and parents frequently apply to the idea of education. The PRH viewpoint on what it really means to educate a child is then explored, emphasising the behaviours and attitudes that best meet a child's basic developmental needs. Our attention is focused on two main themes: the need for recognition, which PRH considers to be the most important of all, and the child's non-existence, which is a serious threat to their ability to grow and develop personally.

Keywords : Child: childhood: education; PRH; needs; aspirations.

Résumé :

À travers le prisme de la psychopédagogie PRH (Personnalité et Relations Humaines), cet article examine les fondements de l'éducation de l'enfant. Nous commençons par examiner les cadres implicites ou explicites que les éducateurs et les parents appliquent fréquemment à l'idée d'éducation. Le point de vue du PRH sur ce que signifie vraiment éduquer un enfant est ensuite exploré, en mettant l'accent sur les comportements et les attitudes qui répondent le mieux aux besoins fondamentaux de développement de l'enfant. Notre attention se concentre sur deux thèmes principaux : le besoin de reconnaissance, que le PRH considère comme le plus important de tous, et la non-existence de l'enfant, qui constitue une menace sérieuse pour sa capacité à grandir et à se développer personnellement.

Mots Clés : l'enfant ; l'enfance ; éducation ; PRH ; besoins, aspirations.

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Introduction :

The education of children is a theme on which many researchers have worked, seeking to demonstrate what they believe are the best ways of being and doing to ensure the child receives an optimal education. They have sought, through different approaches, to identify the needs of the child and to describe parental attitudes and behaviors first, then extra-parental ones, that promote or hinder the psychological and organic growth of the child. We all know that a fulfilling childhood equals a life of responsible, mature, and autonomous adulthood. It is in this regard that we ask the following question: what are the foundations of a healthy education that we could provide to our children and that would promote their psycho-emotional growth?

To answer this question, we referred to the interpretations provided by the PRH school on the different psychological dynamics that inhabit a child, and the way of being and acting that parents and educators should adopt towards them. An organization we know quite well, given that we have participated in more than twenty training sessions on various topics it has offered in Algeria, through its accredited trainers present here.

First, let's start by giving a brief description of the nature of this organization. PRH, Personality and Human Relations, is an international training and research organization in the field of psychology, founded in 1970. It focuses on the personality of the individual, embedded in a human environment, experiencing interpersonal relationships. PRH psychopedagogy (also called PRH training) was born from the confluence of André Rochais, and a group that formed around his thoughts and research. PRH aims to provide any adult who wishes to do so with a set of training resources, among which there are courses on child education. It is based on the theoretical support of this school, which is akin to the positive psychology movement, that we have developed our article while referring to various works conducted around the world; and which address childhood and the different forms of support, as well as the various difficulties that parents and educators may face

Parents and educators initially have different kinds of ideas and representations about how to educate the children in their care. We will begin by asking what the frame of reference is with which parents approach their educational approach.

1- The framework of reference for parents and educators in children's education :

Whether they are aware of it or not, all parents and educators possess within them a background of ideas about education to which they instinctively refer when educating the children in their care. This background presents itself as a frame of reference in which a synthesis of numerous elements brought by their own experience, by the experience of others, and by prevailing theories is imprinted. We can identify the following as constitutive elements of this frame of reference:

The memories of how their own parents and educators dealt with them and their siblings, in such and such circumstances, at such a stage of growth, in the face of such a problem. These memories influence them. They tend to replicate what was good for them and avoid replicating what hurt them, without often questioning whether it is suitable for their child.

♦ Principles, rules, methods, which we consider useful and good to try to apply to these children;

♦ Ideas, theories, images, stereotypes, judgments, received or developed by oneself about what a human being is, a child, about their growth, about how to educate them. Thus, depending on whether one has a rather positive or rather negative view of human beings, one will not educate in the same way. In the first case, the priority will be to support the child and trust in their potential; in the other case, emphasis will be placed on correcting what is wrong and acquiring.

♦ Goals, ideals constituting references for what children should be, do, and become.

♦ Feelings related to one's own history and the influence of the environment, experiences of happiness in the family, the density of happy memories, and also fears, guilt that drive ways of being or doing with these children.

♦ The frame of reference for parents and educators also includes "shortcomings" that manifest as hesitations, doubts, and questions: one does not know what to think or what to do. There can also be confusion in the minds of parents, linked to the presence of contradictory elements in the references they have (for example, some hear on one hand that it is not good to punish a child, and on the other that a child who does not receive a good spanking from time to time will later become a delinquent), which can result in excessively authoritarian behaviors. In this regard, researchers have observed that excessive parental control is linked to externalized behaviors, delinquency, and antisocial behaviors according to Patterson, G. R., DeBaryshe, B. D., and Ramsey, E. (1989, pp. 329-335), as well as internalized behaviors such as anxiety according to Grüner, K., Muris, P., and Merckelbach, H. (1999, pp. 27-35) or depression according to Muris, P., Schmidt, H., Lambrichts, R., and Meesters, C. (2001, pp. 555-565).

Becoming aware of this background that often determines educational actions can be essential. Because it allows them to avoid acting under influence and to provide appropriate responses to the various needs of the child. Some theories or principles may prove to be good in themselves, but they may not constitute the appropriate response to a child's need at a given moment, strictly following certain good theories does not necessarily represent the right educational approach to have with a child.

It is from this existing reality that we have just described that we move on to the second point, which concerns the nature of educational modalities according to PRH.

1-2. According to PRH, what is education?

According to the PRH explanatory system and the observations and experiences it has accumulated through the training work it has undertaken with people in more than forty countries around the world, here is how PRH-International (1997, p. 234) conceives the education of a child:

♦ Help the child become who they are: according to PRH-International (1995, p. 3): "the child who appears on earth is a bundle of potentialities that aspire to be actualized: he has physical limits, he has his psychological limits. It is here for parents or educators to help a child develop their potential and qualities of being, to foster the emergence of their unique personality while taking into account their limits, whether physical (disabilities, gender-boy-girl, health, etc.) or psychological (gifted in a particular artistic field, for example, and less so in other areas). The child needs to be encouraged in this personalization to build an identity that is uniquely theirs. Bretherton (1999, pp. 343-357) explains that when a child perceives their parent as sensitive and adequate, they will be free to express their needs and discuss all of their emotional experiences.

♦ Help the child find what they are meant for: it is about helping a child gradually discover their path, their vocation, the area of action that most corresponds to their deep personality. Indeed, even if a child has varied aptitudes, not all activities exert the same attraction on them or engage them in the same way; they aspire to a specific action where the essence of themselves can be invested. This is manifested by the ability of the parent or educator to perceive the child's strengths and qualities, reflect them back to the child, and encourage them to develop them even further.

♦ Helping the child find their place in society: it is ensuring that the child can be integrated into a social environment, and that they can weave and maintain relationships; it is accompanying this child in their beginnings in community and social life so that they eventually feel they have a place in this society and that they are welcome. In other words, it is preparing them for life in society.

Theoretically speaking, raising a child may seem easy, but we are certain that many parents and educators will not agree. To try to explore this question further, we move on to another point that we consider very important:

♦ It is about trying to identify and describe the most basic and fundamental needs of a child according to PRH. On this basis, we ask the following question: what are the most fundamental needs that parents and educators must be attentive to?

The reason why PRH-International lists six (6) fundamental needs that must be met for the child to develop and grow normally, his growth and psychological maturation depend on the degree of his satisfaction of these fundamental needs.

1-1-2. Recognize the Being of the Child:

The education of a child consists of helping them become who they are. This implies that the educational environment's primary objective should be to facilitate the child's understanding of their being and to help them realize their potential while considering their limitations. A child only begins to know themselves through the image that is reflected back to them, primarily the one experienced and communicated by their parents. Numerous international studies have highlighted, during the preschool age, the links between the images of early relationships experienced with parents, and particularly with the mother: Main, M. and Kaplan, N. and Cassidy, J. (1985, pp. 66-104); Cassidy, J. (1988, pp. 121-134); Verschueren, K. and Marcoen, A. and Scöefs, V. (1996, pp. 2494-2511); Verschueren, K. and Marcoen, A. (1999, pp. 183-201), with the quality of socio-emotional development: Wartner, U. G. and Grossmann, K. and Fremmer-Bombik, E. and Suess, G. (1994, pp. 1014-1027).

This recognition of the child's deep identity by their parents is fundamental for the child to grant themselves the right to exist as they are and to feel joy from it. The repeated absence of this recognition, or worse, the rejection of the child in their being, causes a very significant wound in them that PRH calls the "non-existence" wound.

1-2-2. Living and Communicating a Selfless Love for the Child :

So that the child can structure themselves from a normal image of themselves and thus access a healthy relationship with themselves and others, they need to receive a quality of love from the people important to them. It is this received love that authenticates that he is "lovable." PRH International (2006, p. 3) defines this quality of love as follows: "Deep love is awakened by the beauty of someone's being, in front of whom one has taken the time to stop and look deeply." It gently rises

within oneself, fills the being without forcing it, and radiates a gentle happiness. The role of parents is therefore to bestow this unconditional love that emanates from their being, a love filled with tenderness and affection, a respectful love, a love manifested in gestures, looks, tone of voice, dedicated time, words, and personalized attentions. This love towards the child is also imbued with kindness in the face of difficulties, suffering, and indulgence in the face of their mistakes and stumbles. To be able to live and express this love, it is necessary for parents and educators to release their deep affection within themselves. The child who feels freely loved by his mother and father, and not just for the satisfactions he brings, accumulates in his psyche a strength, an emotional security. He also receives a reference that awakens his own capacities for unconditional love and trust in human love.

1-3-2. Provide Security:

A child is a vulnerable being, lacking the physical and moral strength, as well as the intellectual capacities, that could protect them or help them face external dangers. He is completely dependent on others to have his psychological needs met, which are as vital to him as eating and drinking. Insecurity quickly arises in a child when they perceive negative feelings, conflicts, depression, and anxiety in the family environment from which they expect everything. The fear of no longer receiving what is necessary for him to live, or even of being abandoned, strikes him like a death threat and risks paralyzing his life force. In the documentation on children's psychological trauma, domestic violence, for example, constitutes an important stress factor since one of the child's attachment figures is affected: Lehmann, P. (2000, pp. 275-306); Lehmann, P. (1997, pp. 241-257). Domestic violence also puts the child's development at risk: Lang, J. M. and Stover, C. S. (2008, pp. 619-629); Evan, S. E. and Davies, C. and DiLillo, D. (2008, pp. 131-140); Wolfe et al. (2003, pp. 171-187); O'Keefe, M. (1994, pp. 63-78). Children exposed to domestic violence exhibit more internalizing problems, externalizing problems, and lower self-esteem than those who are not McDonald, R. and Jouriles, E. N. and Briggs-Gowan, M. (2007, pp. 176-184); Sternberg, K. J. and Lamb, M. E. and Guterman, E. and Abbott, C. B. (2006, pp. 283-306); Rossman, B. B. R. (2001, pp. 35-66); Fortin, A. and Cyr, M. and Lachance, L. (2000); Graham-Bermann, S. and Levendoski,

It is imperative for parents who want to fully assume their roles to be aware of this extreme state of vulnerability in a child and to take it into account in their relationship with them, avoiding imposing threats or their own insecurities on the child. Their role also lies in an adequate response to his physical and material needs and in protection against dangers. They must surround the child emotionally so that he can confidently feel that he can count on them, that he will never be abandoned. Moreover, the feeling of security or insecurity is largely transmitted by osmosis. It is the parents' responsibility to work on their own insecurities with specialists if they notice them within themselves, which can manifest as overly protective or domineering behaviors. Studies conducted on parent-child dyads show that Support practices are linked to a "secure" attachment, while Control practices are linked to an "insecure" attachment in the child. Karavasilis, L. et Doyle, A. B. et Markiewicz, D. (2003, pp. 153-164). Significant relationships have also been demonstrated between "secure" attachment and the absence of behavioral problems, as well as between "insecure" attachment and behavioral problems in children: Muris, P. et Meesters, C. and van den Berg, S. (2003, pp. 171-183); Roelofs, J. et al (2006, pp. 331-344). On the other hand, we tell parents that it is possible to play an important role, if necessary, by helping their child verbalize their fear instead of repressing it, by peacefully welcoming their fear, and, when possible, by seeking with them what could bring them peace. According to Main (1990, pp. 48-61), when the mother is less available to her child's emotional

states, the child minimizes the importance of emotions and develops an avoidant attachment. Studies have indeed shown that avoidantly attached children have mothers who are less involved in dyadic exchanges and who suppress or denigrate their children's behaviors and emotions more than other mothers: Cyr et al. (2007); Main et al. (1985, pp. 66-104); Stevenson-Hinde, J. and Shouldice, A. (1995, pp. 583-596).

1-4-2. Adapt your Expectations to the Child's Level of Maturity :

It is common for parents to have disproportionate expectations and to behave as if their children were reasonable adults, capable of taking care of themselves, succeeding at the first attempt in everything they undertake, being responsible, understanding, respectful of others' affairs, and independent. But a child needs not to be asked more than they can give, to be accepted in their fumbling and mistakes, they need demands that are proportionate to their stage of development. Parents have a role to play in supporting each child at the pace of their growth, respecting the stages of this growth, accepting that there will be moments of regression or slowness, but also being concerned with awakening them to the responsibilities of their age. This support requires patience, understanding, and strength. Because in the end, every child has the right to their childhood.

1-5-2. Achieve Learning at the Level of Different Knowledge Areas :

In all areas of learning, parents have a role with their children, to pass on their own knowledge and particularly everything that may be useful or of interest to them in this slow ascent towards their autonomy and their encounter with the world. This transmission occurs in different ways: through example, the child learns by watching, then by experimenting, through osmosis with their environment, and through the knowledge and explanations provided by their parents or educators.

The way these learning times are conducted has a significant influence, both for the integration of this knowledge and at the level of the parent-child relationship. During these learning experiences, through the way we approach them, the child experiences a response to the needs of being recognized, being loved, being safe, and being considered a child and not an adult. In other words, adequately responding to a child's learning needs also means addressing the fundamental needs described above. Thus, attitudes of patience, acceptance of the time these learnings require, kindness, flexibility, openness to dialogue, adaptation, and pedagogical creativity make these times effective and often very revitalizing because the child perceives their parents.

Thus, over the years, it is an entire "capital" that the child inherits, which endows them with essential knowledge to realize their potential and thus allows them to become themselves and integrate into society.

1-6-2. Encourage Personalization:

Many parents are tempted to influence the child in a way that aligns with their expectations, what suits them, their value system, especially during choices. It is also common to compare one's children with other people's children, or to compare them with each other. It is not easy for parents to accept that their children are "themselves," whole individuals, sometimes radically different, unique, capable of making choices and directing their lives in other directions.

The role of the parents will be to accept this otherness and to facilitate it. Perceived as unique, reassured in the sense of their personality, the child will gradually gain confidence in who they are and, when the time comes, set the goal of becoming themselves, daring more and more to assert

themselves, including in their differences. Thus, gradually, all individuals are called to become people with their own originality and their unique inner reference.

2. Discussion :

2-1 The Aspiration to Exist and the Need to be Recognized:

The child comes into the world with an irresistible aspiration to exist that naturally drives them to grow along the axis of the nascent personality within them, which characterizes them. But just as strong within him is a need to be recognized in this aspiration to become who he is, primarily by the people important to him: his mother, his father, his siblings, his teachers, his classmates, etc. He needs to be recognized for the right to exist as he is, especially in what constitutes the core of himself, and not to be abandoned. It is more essential for him than receiving tenderness.

To experience this feeling of being recognized, the child needs to feel that their life is valued in the eyes of those dear to them, that it is welcomed with happiness, that there is a willingness to invest in their success because they believe in them, that they feel capable of becoming someone of value, someone who can bring something good to others. The satisfaction of his need to be recognized also appears when he feels that what he tries to communicate in his own way is of interest, that it is seen, heard, understood, respected, appreciated.

Moreover, the child needs to be welcomed and accepted with their limitations, for them to be taken into account so that they are not expected to do something that is beyond their reach. This feeling of being recognized and loved is induced only if an adequate way of being and doing is sufficiently consistent towards them. Thus, to the extent that the child receives sufficient satisfaction of their need to be recognized, their personality develops harmoniously. Studies have observed a link between secure attachment in children and positive mother-child conversations focused on emotional sharing: Cyr, C. and Dubois-Comtois, K. and Moss, E. (2007); Etzion-Carasso, A. and Oppenheim, D. (2000, pp. 347-370); Fivush, R. and Vasudeva, A. (2002, pp. 73-90); Laible, D. (2004, pp. 979-992); Main, M. and Kaplan, N. and Cassidy, J. (1985, pp. 66-104); Newcombe, R. and Reese, E. (2004, pp. 230-245).

2-2 The Phenomenon of Non-Existence in Children:

The phenomenon of non-existence manifests through an internal defense system that prevents the child not only from feeling their aspiration to exist in areas where they do not feel accepted but also from experiencing their abilities. PRH-International (1992, p. 5) explains that: "non-existence sets in because, as a rule, the child is denied the right to be themselves." He is not accepted as he is. Most of the time, the child struggles to be recognized, he expresses the injustice he feels towards himself, he cries out in helplessness in the face of expectations he cannot meet, he claims his right to be loved as he is, he sends all sorts of messages to scream the internal suffering of not being accepted for who he is. But if those around him do not understand his distress, if nothing changes, if his manifestations are reproached, his existential quest will lose intensity. He will gradually feel the futility of his efforts and his cries, and enter a form of despair at being unable to exist as he is due to not being heard and understood in his vital need for recognition.

A break in communication with these important people sets in. A defense mechanism is put in place to stop feeling pain. Ross, D. M. and Ross, S. A. (1984, pp. 71-79) showed that 70% of children aged 5 to 12 years (n = 994) used numerous adjectives to describe a single pain. Similarly, a

majority of children respond spontaneously with a wide variety of adjectives, terms, and phrases describing pain according to Jerrett, M. and Evans, K. (1986, pp. 403-408). Indeed, seeking to be oneself and not being recognized in this existence is such an intolerable and sometimes deconstructive suffering for a child that their psyche, in a survival reflex, prefers to capitulate and repress their fundamental aspiration to exist rather than feel this unspeakable wound. PRH-International (1989, p. 6) explains that: "the failure of the first attempt to exist, at this age of childhood when one is still very vulnerable, leads to a deep doubt about oneself and one's ability to be recognized, valued, and loved." And indeed, this is how negative self-images are born. According to Sroufe, L. A. (1983, pp. 41-83); Howes, C. and Matheson, C. C. and Hamilton, C. E. (1994, pp. 264-273); Grossman, K. E. and Grossman, K. (1991): children who, in their early years of life, have been able to develop secure representations regarding their experiences with parental figures, acquire better social skills in their interactions with peers and educators. In most children, a life instinct drives them not to let themselves be completely annihilated and leads them to compensate for this non-existence at the core of their being by using distorted forms of existence, in order to still glean some ersatz recognition. According to their personality and surroundings, the child, uses particular types of means to continue living:

- ♦ The most common means is "bouncing back" {resilience} to try to restore balance. Not recognized in what constitutes the essence of him, the child rebounds by developing personalities that are appreciated by those around him and that meet the expectations of these people.

- ♦ Some react with a revolt, an almost systematic opposition, through deviance (lying, stealing, drug use, running away). They unconsciously restore a form of justice by being frustrating to those around them. Lévine, J. and Develay, M. (2003, p. 132) state that: "... children who, to defend themselves from aggression against their family or from their family against themselves, lock themselves into attitudes of omnipotence, of non-agreement

- ♦ The "battle classes" show children with extreme sensitivity, intolerant of frustration, enjoying their ability to defy, bearing cores of resentment and violence, not hesitating to show their systematic disagreement and blaming adults for having cheated them.

- ♦ Some exert a kind of pressure on the people they expect to be recognized and loved by using: illness, failures, their fears, etc., to attract their attention, pity, or concern, proof that they are not completely invisible in their eyes. Main, M. (1990) proposes that the inconsistency and unpredictability of maternal care will lead the child to exaggerate their distress in order to maximize their chances of being comforted, which is more associated with the development of an ambivalent attachment.

- ♦ Finally, others can compensate for their frustrations elsewhere with people who acknowledge them.

However, it should be noted that some children, presumably more psychologically fragile, are unable to cope in one way or another, and develop mental pathologies by disconnecting from a reality whose anxiety they cannot bear.

Conclusion:

We believe it is imperative for the well-being of all societies, including ours, to emphasize children's education by deploying all possible means to ensure that parents and various educators can support these children in a way that allows them to develop and grow harmoniously, Maria

Montessori, one of the pioneers of active pedagogies in the education and support of children, said: "The first step to completely solving the problem of education should not be taken towards the child, but towards the educator: one must bring clarity to their conscience and free them from a great number of prejudices." PRH, as an organization, has focused on training adults in order to provide them with all the necessary tools to help them strengthen the good attitudes to adopt with children and to mitigate or eliminate any behavior or reaction that could harm the growth of these children.

It remains a laborious task, because it is not enough to know and understand everything we have just mentioned in our work, but it is necessary to embark on a training process to be initiated into the discovery of one's own personality and to learn to explore one's psychological experiences and personal history that condition the functioning and reactions of each individual.

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