

## **Pedagogical Model of Transition to junior high school for ensuring school achievements**

PhD thesis of pedagogy

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## **Configuring the Pedagogical Model of Transition to junior high school for ensuring school achievements**

The mobilization of all educational factors in supporting pre-adolescent pupils in transition to the junior high school is the cornerstone of the pupils' school success. In this context, the ability of teachers to support pupils is the essential element for quality learning environments. It has been found that pupils, who are supported by teachers and parents, show a positive motivational orientation towards school activity and enjoy tailored social and emotional experiences "[5], [6].

Researchers Graham and Hill [7] support this idea and emphasize the importance of leadership and school culture in the transition process. In their opinion, a successful school transition implies coherence in approaching the well-being of the pupils and their school results. This consistency can be achieved by:

- developing a school system to support pupils from the moment they enter school and during the promotion from one class to another, from one step to another;
- involving pupils and the community in making decisions and implementing transition initiatives;
- the inclusion of transitional practices in the curriculum, teaching and learning programs;
- creating a synergy between the transition and the school's global approach to learning and activities to maintain the health and well-being of pupils.

At class level, the following strategies are beneficial:

- making decisions in common with pupils

- valorisation of pupils' cultural heritage
- use of interactive methods, forming a common vision and agendas for promoting educational excellence.

Regarding the role of parents in supporting the transition from primary to junior high school, they can resort to the following strategies: creating a favorable environment for focusing on studies, creating a calendar of activities that will make pupils more organized, planning different activities in common with children and so on. The participation of parents in the educational activity is based on the idea that the partnership between school and family ensures the school success of the pupils [8].

Researchers U. Sirsch [10], P. West [11] identified the following issues that speak to the quality of school transition [9]:

- the pupils participate in the school activities, they are in good relations with their colleagues and teachers;
- teachers express interest in pupils, know their interests, learning needs and strengths;
- pupils are understood and valued as culturally identified persons;
- the pupils show commitment and understanding regarding the schooling process within the school and beyond, they are progressing;
- learning is constructive, interesting, relevant and fun;
- families participate in decision making;
- pupils are physically and emotionally confident;
- expresses the desire to try new and interesting things and / or to extend their specific skills / interests, for example, through extra-curricular activities

Taking into account the epistemological aspects of transition to the junior high school, it was developed a *Pedagogical model of transition to the junior high school* (Fig. 2.1), which has a theoretical and praxiological character, and includes a Methodological program for supporting transition through a set of strategies aimed at ensuring pupils' school achievements in transition to the junior high school.

**The conceptual framework** of the model summarizes factors, conditions and principles of facilitating the transition to the junior high school, as well as the components of school achievements, approached through the challenges of transition to the junior high school, in turn intensified by the psychophysiological particularities specific to pre-adolescence. *The objectives of the pedagogical model of transition to the junior high school* were:

- development of an integrated educational program for facilitating adaptation to the junior high school level;

- participatory, informative and counseling approach aimed at parents of pupils in a position to foster the development of a pro-education mentality and sustainable partnerships between school-parents-community;
- the professionalization of the teaching staff that will participate in the implementation of the transition methodological program;
- elaboration of methodologies, tools and procedures adapted to the needs of transition from the primary to the junior high school, in order to reduce the discrepancies of curricular approach; elaboration, implementation and validation of the transition program [1].

The components of school success exhibited in the model (cognitive, affective and volitional component) were selected as a result of studying the literature on the interaction of cognitive-affective and volitional acts. According to the scientist M. Zlate, knowledge results from the multiple relations of the human subject with reality, and the impetus for their assimilation and valorization is due to the emotion, which through the energetic mobilization of the whole organism determines the conduct [4, p.172].

All the psychic processes are activated in the learning activity. On the one hand, learning involves all processes and psychic functions, thinking and memory, motivation and affectivity, especially language, volition and attention. On the other hand, learning, especially in its intensive forms, contributes to the modeling, structuring and constitution of the psychic processes, because, enriching their content, it also requires the construction of new means operating special restructuring or organization within the whole human psychic. We adhere to these concepts and underline that in the context of the transition to junior high school, the goal of school success is to capitalize on all these processes in the service of learning, and learning in the service of psychic processes. However, appreciating their contribution to ensuring school success during the transition to high school, as well as the intensity of their manifestation during pre-adolescence, we consider it imperative to develop and capitalize on the volitional, cognitive and affective aspects, which, in our opinion, can be addressed as components. of school success.

Volition is a function that results from the integrity and unity of the personality, which involves in a specific phase the participation of all psychic functions. R. Baumeister [1, p.241-242] defines volition as "an educable muscle". In its acceptance, volition represents a limited resource, and its components include attention, self-control and perseverance. The modern society with all its elements of distraction and stimulation tests our volitional qualities.

Baba Shiv, a marketing professor at Stanford Graduate School of Business, said that people who are distracted are more likely to give in to temptations. When the mind is concerned, choices will be guided by impulses, not by long-term goals [2, p. 34]. Among the signs of poor volition, the following can be identified: low attention span, tendency to be distracted, lack of

perseverance, impulse control problems, hyperactivity, chronic tendency to delay (poor time planning), disorganization, impulse to delay and others.

Upon entering the junior high school, pre-adolescents will reach a new level of willpower, which is expressed in the following aspects: the ability to set goals and to select and choose the most significant and appropriate for one situation or another. As this stage progresses, pre-adolescents will be able to conduct themselves more and more following established projects and goals, being less influenced by moments temptations. Pre-adolescence has a significant contribution to the general development of volition as a basic condition of integration in complex learning and other more difficult activities in the next stage [3, p. 150-151].

Psychoemotional changes that affect the life of the pre-adolescent pupil may, in their turn, have decisive repercussions on his behavior. With the a mirror effect, behavior reflects the inner world of the pupil, transmitting eloquent messages about possible disturbances and their pressing needs, which take the form of different socio-moral and school transgressions, respectively. In the specialty literature, a variety of terms with close meanings are used: indiscipline, juvenile delinquency, school maladjustment, behavioral disorder, deviation from conduct. The sociological approach claims that school deviance is a normal phenomenon; behaviors that violate school rules are unacceptable, but are normal forms of behavior, in the sense that they represent pupils' attempts to resist / face the specific school circumstances in which they are located [13].

Thus, inappropriate school behavior allows for various interpretations and explanations; pupils are undisciplined because: they seek to gain the attention of the adult, they are bored, they feel they are being treated unfairly, they do not trust the adult and / or other colleagues, they feel humiliated by their school failures, they are treated inappropriately with their abilities and age, they try to acquire power and control over others, they want to show something to their colleagues, they feel frustrated or rejected, they are afraid, they have neurological disorders etc.

In school, an act of indiscipline occurs when a pupil's behavior prevents others from participating in the learning process or disrupts the teacher's activity, but can cover a wide range of behavioral manifestations, of extreme diversity, in terms of severity, clinical description, of stability and structuring of deviant reactions, of intensity, of etiological factors weight, among which: copying, escape from school, absenteeism, school dropout, vandalism, violent conduct and addiction and even suicide.

The concern of psycho-pedagogues is primarily to prevent behavioral deviations, that is more effective than their therapy. In order to prevent it, the teacher needs to know the pupils, their family environment (for example, to detect early orphans, abandoned children, those with divorced parents, those with neuropsychiatric disorders, etc.), in order to be able to take corresponding

measures. Specifically, in the classroom, the teacher can use different strategies to avoid or resolve conflict situations resulting from pupils' deviant behaviors. According to Saunders, [12] , the teacher can use:

- *Avoidance strategies.* The teacher is tolerant, makes jokes, to avoid the conflict. These strategies cannot be used often because the teacher will lose credibility. They are only a momentary solution, not always the best.
- *Mitigation strategies.* By deferral actions, tangential responses, deliberately ignoring the main sources of conflict. Nor do these strategies resolve the conflict.
- *Confrontation strategies.* They include: force or negotiating strategies. Force strategies are guided by the principle "Divide et impera", ie the division of the group of pupils engaged in conflict or the conflict situation. There can also be made threats that will never be put into practice. Also, rewards can be promised or school tradition can be appealed. The negotiating ones are those whe the pupils involved in the conflict seem willing to accept a rational solution. Three procedures can be used: compromise, appeal to affiliation or pseudo-compromise.

Motivation for learning is a key factor in the learning process and substantially influences its results. It refers to the set of motives that cause the pupil to come to school and learn. In the psycho-pedagogical literature, two types of motivation for learning are addressed: *extrinsic motivation* (desire to affirm, normative tendencies, fear of consequences, ambition) and *intrinsic motivation* (curiosity, desire to learn as much). Intrinsic motivation is more important and more effective in learning than extrinsic, but at an early age, this ratio is reversed [13].

## TRANSITION FROM PRIMARY TO JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

**Purpose:** Facilitating transition from primary to junior high school for ensuring school achievements

### Objectives

- ✓ develop an integrated educational program for facilitating adaptation to the junior high school level;
- ✓ participatory, informative and counseling approach aimed at pupils' parents and teachers;
- ✓ professionalize the teaching staff participating in the implementation of the methodological program;
- ✓ elaborate methodologies, tools and procedures adapted to the needs of transition from primary to junior high school.
- ✓ develop, implement and validate the transition methodological program for supporting transition to junior high school.

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

**Factors of school transition:** individual, school, family.

**Components of school achievements:** cognitive, affective, volitive

**Transition challenges:** new school environment, new colleagues, new teachers, complex homework, independent travel to school, new school subjects etc.

**Consequences of transition:** fear, anxiety, reduced self-esteem, decreased motivation for learning, deviant behavior, school dropout.

### PROCEDURAL FRAMEWORK

**Managerial directions:** administrative, social, individual, curricular, pedagogic.

**Transition steps:** preparation, transfer, induction in the junior high school, consolidation.

**Conditions** for facilitating school transition and ensuring school achievements: psychological, educational,

#### Principles of transition:

- concentration on the interactional aspect;
- creating a stimulative school climate;
- focusing on pupils' individual needs;
- consolidating the partnership among primary school- junior high school - family.

#### Objectives of the methodological transition program:

- improving school results;
- combating and preventing school anxiety of pupils in the process of transition to the junior high school;
- intensifying their motivation for learning;
- preventing deviant behaviors specific to the puberty stage by capitalizing on a set of specific methodological tools;
- stimulating epistemic curiosity.

**Strategies and methods:** modeling, role-play, self-regulation, debate, active learning, brain-storming, meditation, conversation etc.

**Educational forms:** meetings, workshops, group work, excursions, visits etc.

**Indicators of school transition quality:** good school results, increased motivation for learning, reduced school anxiety and adequate behavior.

**FINALITY:** Ensuring school achievements and integration (cognitive, affective and volitive components) of pupils within the junior high school.

The intrinsic motivation is the foundation of training logical-mathematical thinking skill and of the use of operational and formal reasoning strategies, but for this to be successful this is not enough, the pupil must have the motivation to determine him to use the acquired skills.

The main theories of motivation were divided into three categories, depending on the answer to the key questions:

1. "Can I solve this task?" (where the issue of ability / capacity matters);
2. "Do I want to solve this task?" (where the value that the pupils bestow on the learning task and their interest in the activity matters);
3. "What should I do to successfully complete this task?" (about how pupils get to monitor and adjust their learning).

To be motivated, one needs to have a strong volition, they are in a relationship of mutual dependence. Motivation and volition are the basis of life, fulfillment, spiritual and material fulfillment, hence the need to develop these aspects throughout schooling, especially during vulnerable period.

**The procedural framework** includes the managerial directions for tackling the transition to the junior high school level: administrative, social, individual, curricular, pedagogical, the objectives and principles of the methodological program for transition elaborated according to pupil' needs: combating and preventing pupils' school anxiety in the transition process; intensifying the motivation for learning; preventing deviant behaviors among pupils in the process of transition to junior high school; stimulating epistemic curiosity.

The training topics included in the program are focused on diminishing the deconstructive effects of transition in the psycho-pedagogical aspect and, respectively, on the promotion of mobilizing educational practices, with a positive impact on motivation for learning and the school behavior, which maximize the opportunity of the pupils with difficulties of adaptation to the junior high school to benefit of multiple services in an efficient and well-coordinated environment which, consequently, leads to school achievement. For this purpose, a set of educational strategies and methods were selected, capable of mobilizing pupils' intellectual and emotional resources in order to overcome the difficulties and crises of school adaptation: self-regulation, modeling, exercise, role-playing, conversation, brain-storming, debate and so on.

The format of the activities included in the program was chosen based on the objectives of the training program, the psycho-pedagogical profile of the pupils and the resources available: meetings, workshops, group work, visits, etc.

The relevance of the *Pedagogical model of transition to the junior high school for ensuring school achievements* is mainly objectified at the level of the conscious and progressive adequacy of the educational reality and at the level of addressing the needs of pre-adolescent pupils in transition to the junior high school, so as to maximally valorize their psycho-pedagogical potential and to ensure school achievements.

## **Conclusions**

1. The commitment of the educational system towards each pupil consists in ensuring a continuous educational sequence, based on the particularities of age, content, values and standards required. Israeli society, like others, is deeply marked by global social phenomena: migration, intensification of socio-economic differences, diversity of religions, violence, unemployment. Under these conditions, negative consequences are felt in all areas, especially in education. Learning, year by year, seems to be losing value, and pupils are becoming less motivated to learn, more emotionally unstable, which presents a huge risk to the future of the country and human society in general. The moral duty of adults is to prevent this human collapse by implementing effective strategies to support pupils in difficulty, which will generate constructive behaviors, psycho-emotional stability, motivation for learning and, respectively, school success, which is a prerequisite for the successful social integration of developing adults.

1. Among the most effective strategies to support the school transition are the transition education programs elaborated based on the specific educational needs of the pupils concerned and on their physical and psycho-emotional particularities. In order to ensure the functionality of transition programs, all the decision-makers, as well as the parents of the pupils, must be involved in the process. The functionality and efficiency of transition programs is determined by the connection to the stages of the transition: preparation, transfer, induction and consolidation, and by the educational tools selected in order to support the transition to the junior high school stage. In this perspective, they must target different areas: administrative, social and individual, curricular, methodological and metacognitive, which will ensure connection,



responsibility and involvement at the level of school institution, class or group of pupils, family and individual pupil.

2. The pedagogical model of transition to the junior high school has a theoretical-practical character and includes: factors, conditions and principles of school transition to the junior high school level, as well as the components of school achievement (cognitive, affective and volitional), approached in accordance with the challenges of transition to the junior high school, in turn, intensified by the psychophysiological particularities of the pre-adolescent pupils; and the Methodological Program for supporting transition, which involves the use of a set of strategies and methods meant to ensure the school achievement of the pupils during school transition.

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