

**VYGOTSKY THEORIES & MEANINGFUL  
RELATIONSHIPS**

by

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## ABSTRACT

This Project contains two main topics: “The Vygotsky Theories” and “Meaningful Relationships”. Both were selected to be taught to teachers, principals, managing officials and supervisors in Mexico’s context, all of which will be done in workshops under my supervision and care.

The first theme: “The Vygotsky’s Theories” explains his Theories and Notions on “Early Childhood Education”, “Social Development Theory”; “Learning and Development of Preschool Children” and “The Zone of Proximal Development”. About Education for Children with Special Needs, an analysis is made about the great contributions Vygotsky made in this field as a support to “Remediation through Education”; “Psychological Tools and Mediated Learning” & “Theory of Disontogenesis”. The importance of the selection of these topics is that the Preschool Educational Programs in Mexico, now in use have their sustentation in Vygotsky’s Theories, but they are vaguely mentioned and they appear out of context, to explain them will lead to a thorough comprehension by understanding the reasons for every day’s practice.

The second theme: “Meaningful Relationships”, expose the need to establish interpersonal relations into the school’s working atmosphere; to reach this goal the project is based in three theories: *Arthur Combs*’, who gives special consideration to The Teacher as a Human Being with a Professional Growth and formulates basic principles upon which Dispositions-Centered Teacher Education Programs may rest; *William Glasser*’s, who introduces the concept of The Five Basic Needs and the Differences between Boss Management and Lead Management; and *Carl Jung*’s who

used his Psychological Type to describe and explain the patterns observable in normal behavior.

## DEDICATION

*To my Children Carlos and Sofia, for fulfilling my life with dreams and hope, for showing me that the capacity of love is infinite, and for inspiring me to do and perform everything*

*To my Mother Leticia, for her unconditional love and support in every step of the way, and for making my goals hers*

*To my Grandmother Amanda, for being the lantern of all my paths, that guides me even when absent. I miss you!*

*To Carolyn, my angel, for sharing with me her example of life and mending my wings to fly once again*

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## **CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION**

### **Background: Mexico's Educational context**

My entrance to Simon Fraser University was a great success, both personal and professional. I remembered my school days in Mexico's educational system. The many difficulties I had encountered in such a rigid, square, static, and conductive system. Those unyielding obligations that would not allow personal growth or creativity, but instead repressed you as an individual; trying to mould everyone into one same mind.

In fact, the effects of such education branded me in such a way that even now I am surprised that I chose by myself to become a teacher. Perhaps the fact that my mother and grandmother were teachers influenced in my decision; they were teachers for the love of their jobs. They dedicated their lives to the fulfillment of their careers. Perhaps it was their ethicality and professional ways that diluted some of the damages of such a rigid education.

I have always been creative and innovative, however, the system did not only reproach my desire to be different; it treated me as though it were a crime. Those elementary and high school years are printed in my mind. "You must use blue ink to write the questions, red ink for the answers, and leave a 3 centimeters margin to your left; my notebooks and books covered with given colors, no figures, no stickers. The worst were those long memorization sessions of useless data which very seldom had a specific use, the hollow repetition of the multiplication tables, the writing of hundreds of pages without an actual context, the learning of fractions without the use of concrete objects.



Tests were done in a hurry and answered by meaningless memorization. Just a few hours later and I had already forgotten the contents.

I learned to cheat, lie, and manipulate the system; I “apparently” did what I was told to do while I was dreaming in a fantasy world. I was scolded many times for talking in class. It was just that everything being taught was pathetically useless and boring. Nobody noted my ability to do three different things at the same time and still keep the same amount of concentration; I do not really know how I survived the system, I just did.

When I entered College to become a teacher, my situation changed, for the first time in my life as a student I was interested in knowing something for myself. I finished my career as a Teacher with a good GPA and with a deep desire to learn more, to do better. I began reading and studying, my hunger for knowledge was never satisfied.

Eleven years after I had started my career, I entered a University to get Graduate Studies, this time I finished with Honors; those school years full of frustration were left aside. The same year I finished my Graduate Studies (1996) I became the Principal of a Kindergarten. I learned to study; I grew; I achieved a mature view of my quest for knowledge and I did it without the help of the system. Ironically, the system I currently work for.

## Purpose

Having passed through that kind of difficulties I can now put myself in others' shoes. Those poor students, which like me, learn and grow *with the teacher, without the teacher, and in spite of the teacher*. My thirst to find a change in the attitude to teach has not burned up, quite the contrary, it grows, and it gets stronger. Thanks to this I began my studies to get a Master's in Education in the first world, in Canada, in one of the most prestigious Universities in this country. I started with my head and heart full of dreams, with thousands of questions, thousands of fears; having against me the barrier of language, the differences in writing, the teaching techniques. On the other hand, a world of innovation and creativeness was mine for the taking. I had my hands full and no clue of where to start. I was free to be creative, and for the very first time, able to immerse into different cultures, to hear and be heard.

Once I initiated my Master studies, one of the first surprises I encountered was the fact that I had the freedom to choose some of the courses I needed. This was new to me since in Mexico all the educational levels are pre-established with the subjects that have to be taken. There are no options or variations. I selected my optional subjects in Psychology, as I considered it my best choice. In those courses I learned not only as a person but as a professional as well, how to use the knowledge I was getting; this took me to a deep thought about the needs to be able to understand the correct application of those theories to be able to manage them in given circumstances.

In course 819, Teacher/Student Interaction, I had the great fortune of having Dr. Carolyn Mamchur as my tutor, her warmth and attentiveness are an example to the academic community. She teaches with the example of her own life, she is coherent in the practice and the action. Thanks to her guidance I could solve my personal crisis, and advance in my preparation. Thanks to her course now I know the kind of person I am. Her description of my personality –based in Jung’s Psychological Type- was the most precise someone has ever done. This made me take a clear view of my life’s perspectives, my wishes, goals, and future. Also I began to understand the reasons for my past actions.

In course 827 Individual Differences in Learning, course given by Dr. Natalia Gajdamaschko we examined the current conceptions of individual differences that characterize the heterogeneity of students' abilities in school. During this course I got to know Lev Vygotsky’s Theories which I deeply admire, lucky me; Natalia is a real expert in this field.

Before these two courses I used to put pedagogy before psychology, and now I know they are equals. I thought that with a good management of pedagogic theories I could solve all and every one of the mistakes and omissions of the educational system, but I was wrong; I learned that we need the base of psychology to solve many of the deficiencies and differences in the learning process.

The scholarship I was given by the Mexican Government will require me to teach the application of the knowledge studied at Simon Fraser University. The election of

those topics were “The Vygotsky Theories” & “Meaningful Relationships”, both inspired and based in the theories I analyzed and studied in my Psychology courses.

## **Contents**

*In Chapter II*, “The Vygotsky Theories” I will make an analysis of the education in Mexico, with the comparison of the 3 different **Preschool Educational Programs (PEP)**, implemented throughout my 23 years of service: PEP 1981, PEP 1992 and the actual program PEP 2004; that make kindergarten obligatory. Subsequently, I will make a comparative analysis among Jean Piaget’s Theories in which PEP 81, and PEP 92’s programs were based, and Lev Vygotsky’s Theories which are the base for the PEP 2004. From there, I will analyze some of Vygotsky’s Theories concerning to early childhood education: “The Vygotskian approach in early childhood”; “Social development Theory”; “Learning and development of preschool children” and “The Zone of Proximal Development”. As the 2004 program in Mexico includes a base that children with special educational needs have to be incorporated in regular schools, I will evaluate the great contributions that Vygotsky made as a support to this field: “Remediation Through Education”; “Psychological Tools and Mediated Learning” & “Theory of Disontogenesis”.

*In Chapter III* “Meaningful Relationships” I will provide an introduction of Arthur Combs’ Theory, which in the Perceptual-Field Psychology; it formulates basic principles upon which dispositions-centered teacher education programs may rest. Also

the fundamental assumption that all behavior of a person is the direct result of his/her field of meanings at the moment of behaving is the basis of the rest of the chapter.

I will continue by analyzing “William Glasser’s Choice Theory” and his five basic needs: “The Need to Survive, The Need to Belong, The Need to Gain Power, The Need to Be Free, and The Need to Have Fun”. From the same source I make a comparison among the theories of Boss Management & Lead Management.

To conclude with this chapter I present my last theory: Carl Jung’s Psychological Type, and the Innate Behavioral Patterns that he has termed Archetypes. His theory is that we are constantly choosing between the open act of perceiving, and the closed act of judging. Jung maintained that individuals prefer to perceive either through their senses or their intuition, and prefer to make judgments either through their thinking or feeling processes.

*Chapter IV* is the conclusion and projection of the ways I work with teachers when I return to Mexico and fulfill the mandate of my scholarship. The chapter describes how I will organize and lead the workshops of the topics chosen. This outline will help me set the theory into practice so that through the research and design processes, I will help my fellow teachers improve their knowledge.

## **CHAPTER II VYGOTSKY THEORIES**

### **Mexico's Educational Context**

The love for children and the concern to be better prepared to influence their development in the most positive way has lead me to constantly search for innovative ways to improve my practice. As a teacher first, and then as a principal of a kindergarten in Mexico where I have worked for 23 years I understood how crucial my role is in improving my practice.

Three reforms have passed during this period of time. I will briefly discuss those attempts to reform the educational program in order to explain that despite the good intentions, they all clearly missed some key issues.

In Mexico, the Public Secretary of Education S.E.P. is in charge of establishing all the study programs for all the educational levels, (preschool, elementary school, high school, preparatory school and universities) for all the country; and also for all the modalities that are being offered. (federal, state, and private schools).

Kindergarten was considered with a peculiar transpose: it was assumed that a child is a person with special proper characteristics, ways of thinking, and acting, with needs to be respected, and needs for a favorable environment to be able to relate with other children. In addition a child is assumed to have rather individualized developing, intellectual, and emotional rhythms. All of those assumptions about children and their

development resulted in attempts to provide a didactic organization that would facilitate a graduate incorporation of a child into social life.

## **Jean Piaget Psychogenetic Theory**

The 1981 and 1992's programs for preschool education were mostly based in Jean Piaget's psychogenetic theories which explain "the developing of intelligence in the joining of biological maturity, the work and experience acquired through actions the child applies to objects since the day of birth and through social interaction,"<sup>1</sup> that is, through the relationship a child establishes with the people with whom he lives and interacts during daily life. It also mentions affectivity, as an "inherent factor to each conduct and the equilibrium as an active compensatory mechanism between subject and object in the process to build knowledge."<sup>2</sup> Piaget was interested in how an organism adapts to its environment which he describes as intelligence. Behavior, as adaptation to the environment, controlled through mental organizations called schemes that the individual uses to represent the world and designate action. This adaptation is driven by a biological force to obtain balance between schemes and the environment named equilibrium.

Piaget described two processes used by the individual in its attempt to adapt: assimilation and accommodation. Both of these processes are used throughout life as the person increasingly adapts to the environment in a more complex manner. His theory is set up primarily on the biological influences. Piaget stressed that development is based on

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<sup>1</sup> Arroyo, M. (2003) Propuestas al enfoque Psicogenetico. Tercer encuentro internacional de educacion inicial y preescolar. Monterrey Nuevo León Mexico (p. 6)

<sup>2</sup> Arroyo, M. (2003) Propuestas al enfoque Psicogenetico. Tercer encuentro internacional de educacion inicial y preescolar. Monterrey Nuevo León Mexico (p. 7)

biological capabilities and their interaction with the environment. As a result of Piaget's ideas, he described four major stages of development through which all children progress at varying ages. The stages are: sensory motor, preoperational, concrete operations, and formal operations.

The preoperational stage, the one which occurs in kindergarten level from two to seven years of age, is characterized by advances in symbolic thought, language, and an egocentric view. This stage includes a symbolic function: distinguished by the use of mental symbols, words, or pictures, which the child uses to represent something that is not physically present. Concentration: indicated by a child concentrating more on one aspect of a person which is consistent, rather than focusing on the inconsistent aspects of his personality, behavior, or physical characteristics. Intuitive thought: that occurs when the child is able to believe in something without knowing why she or he believes in it. Inability to conserve: through Piaget's conservation experiments as conservation of mass, volume, and number Piaget concluded that children in the preoperational stage will not be able to conserve mass, volume, or number after the original form has been changed.



## The 1981 Preschool Program

Even though in Mexico the 1981 and 1992 programs presented the same theoretical focus, both had a different way to present contents and activities. The 1981's preschool program established three areas of development:

<b>Affective/Social</b>	<b>Physical</b>	<b>Cognitive</b>
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To organize these three areas, 10 thematic units were created with activities that began in the child's real world with concrete experiences. Those units were:

“School Integration: what we wear, what we eat, where we live, health care, different jobs, money and goods, means of transportation, media, and holydays & cultural traditions”<sup>3</sup>.

My personal experience with this program is that despite the theoretical background, in daily practice it was monotonous and insubstantial. The prolonged existence of this program - 12 years - resulted in teachers who did not look for new ways to present their daily work, and bored students who knew what was going to come next. During that time, children worked everyday with materials and printed sheets of paper that were repetitive; applying the same techniques over and over again. The focus of this program was that interest and curiosity in children should arise through the activities, but

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<sup>3</sup> Arroyo M & Robles M (1981) Programa de Educacion Preescolar, libro 1, planificación general del programa. (p.49-51)

in every day's work the teachers gave a conductive approach, one in which children could not give any suggestions to plan proper actions.

## The 1992 Preschool Program

The 1992's preschool program embraces four dimensions of development, and they are the same ones from the previous program, only this time they were presented with different names: intellectual instead of cognitive, and affective and social were separated in two.

<b>Affective</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>Intellectual</b>	<b>Physical</b>
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This program has five sets of games and activities, instead of the ten units:

*“A child's sensibility & artistic expression, a child's relation with nature, science, ecology & health, physical education with notions of space and time; mathematics, and oral & written language”<sup>4</sup>.*

Those sets of games and activities were organized in Projects which are topics that children consider interesting and it is this same interest that drives them to want to know more about them, they were proposed as a question, a problem, a doubt or a given interest children exteriorized, an example: if a child said that he had spent the weekend visiting his grandparents who live in a cattle ranch where he saw chickens, horses, cows,

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<sup>4</sup> (1992) Programa de Educacion Preescolar. Secretaria de Educacion Pública. (p.36)

and a bull.....by just making this comment some amount of interest would be created and questions would come from some of the children.

So the teacher should then be very attentive to this kind of situations to intervene by questioning the kids, if the topic was strong enough to create interest. But then suppose another child would speak about his visit to the circus, and then the teacher had to make a consensus to choose the subject which most children favored, a cattle ranch or the circus. Once the appropriate topic was selected through questions and answers, the teacher would get to the bottom of the aspects which were really interesting to the children and those answers would bring up the essence of the issues that would be worked on to bring some knowledge from aspects children wanted to know, maybe they were interested on the food animals eat, or what kind of work does a cowboy do, or where do the animals that live in the cattle ranch sleep, etc.

Once the details were defined, the teacher would choose the sets of games that would be appropriated to balance the activities. Perhaps in this case the sets she had to use were: a child's relation with nature, science, ecology and health; and maybe some physical education with notions of space and time could be useful, like animal's habitats, means of transportation etc; of course oral and written language would be present in all the actions that the project would generate, from the organization and selection of the topic, the drawings children might create, symbols and letters.

Each Project had a different time and continuance, it could be 1, 3, or 5 weeks depending on the child's actions and interest, and it should be planned according to the

ages of the children; the different actions generated, organized, and developed, giving structure and articulating it to make sense as the project was being worked on.

Every project had three methodological aspects: “A) A child’s moments of searching, reflection, and experimentation. B) Teachers intervention while developing the activities, C) The relationship between sets of play and games and the activities with the project.”<sup>5</sup>

Although this program had demonstrated enough flexibility to be adapted to the different regions, cultures and social strata of the country, it also lacked within its structure some issues which did not permit its complete practice. One of such deficiencies was the teachers’ resistance to changes. When the new program arrived, a great controversy was created among teachers and parents who felt that if they did not have graphic materials to work with every day (as in the previous program) there would be no way to show the advances children and teachers made.

Other problem was that the 81’s program had been structured in a nonflexible rigid way and the 92’s program gave complete freedom to act.

Another problem was the fact that it did not take in account the age –related abilities of a child- that three year old children do not yet know how to express their emotions and feelings, that their language is not well developed yet made it very difficult, if not impossible for them to suggest a topic for a new project. So, to solve that problem

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<sup>5</sup> (1992) Programa de Educacion Preescolar. Secretaria de Educacion Pública. (p.26, 27)

the teacher would observe carefully –matter that a teacher normally, systematically, and in an organized way does at preschool level- to deduce interests. It is superfluous to say that most of the time those deductions were incorrect; they did not flow from the child’s interests, but from those that the teacher induced were correct.

## **The 2004 Preschool Program**

The third program began to be used in 2004, and it was motivated by a change to Chapter Three of the Mexican Constitution which rules education. All Amendments that rule Mexico are contained in The Political Constitution of Mexico which includes 136 articles. All the education that the state, federation, and municipalities provide must be based in the said Third Article and they must be mandated by the Federal Education Law which also emerges from this basis. Recently that chapter “suffered a big reform that came in force on September 2004; Kindergarten was made obligatory, and must form along with elementary school and junior high school part of the basic obligatory system for all the country”<sup>6</sup>, the above mentioned reform came in force and its requirements will be taken to practice in a gradual way, demanding first: that third grade of preschool will be obligatory in 2004-2005, the second grade by 2005-2006, and the first grade by 2008-2009. These three grades of preschool will attend children from 3 to 6 years of age.

Along with this reform came the most transcendental change: kindergarten’s new structured program was to join the two levels: kindergarten – elementary school.

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<sup>6</sup> Reforma Preescolar (2000) Normatividad Secretaria de Educacion Publica. Acuerdo 278.

The new kindergarten program is organized by competitions, understanding these as the capacity to use the knowledge acquired as children learn. The function of preschool consists in promoting development, and strengthening the fitness, and abilities that each child possesses.

It is an open program that does not define a sequence of activities or situations that a teacher must do successively with the children; the capacities are the basis to organize, develop and evaluate the teacher's work.

The teacher selects and designs several didactic situations that will be pertinent and useful to achieve children's learning; adopts the ways of work that considers more appropriate, and organizes her job in a flexible way to adapt it to the conditions of her group and to the context where she works in.

As a difference from the previous two programs that had no specific pedagogical principles, this new one does have them.

The pedagogical principles that the programs of preschool present are 10 and are divided into three big parts:

**“I) Children's Characteristics and Learning Process:**

- 1 Children come to school with previous knowledge and capacities that are the foundation to keep the learning process.
- 2 The teacher's function is to promote and maintain children's interest, and motivation to learn.
- 3 Children learn in interaction with their equals.
- 4 Play empowers children's development and learning.

**II) Diversity and Equality:**

- 5 Schools must offer children's formative opportunities of equal quality, independently of their socioeconomic and cultural background.
- 6 Teachers, schools and parents must contribute to the integration of children with special educative needs to regular school.
- 7 The school as a place of socialization and learning, must promote the values of equality of rights among children.

**III) Educative Intervention:**

- 8 The environment of the classroom must encourage attitudes that promote learning capacities.
- 9 The teacher's intervention requires a flexible preparation of everyday tasks.
- 10 Collaboration between the school and the family promotes the development of children.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> (2004) Programa de Educacion Preescolar. Secretaria de Educacion Publica. Mexico D.F. (p. 32)

This new program has six formative fields and multiple categories:

<b>Formative Fields</b>	<b>Categories</b>
Personal and Social Development	Personal Identity Interpersonal Relationship
Language and Communication	Oral Written Language
Mathematical thought	Numbers and Shapes Space and Measure
Knowledge and Exploration of the World	Natural World Culture and Social Life
Artistic Expression and Appreciation	Musical Expression & Appreciation Body Expression & Dance Appreciation Plastic Expression & Appreciation Dramatic Expression & Theatre Appreciation
Physical Development and Health	Coordination, Strength & Balance Promotion of Health

I cannot give my personal point of view about this new program because I have not worked with it yet, but some of the teachers in Mexico who are, comment that most of the professors are more interested in the technical aspects of the program such as paper work used for planning, documents to be filled for evaluations, and every day's activities, rather than the theoretical basis of the program. This means that again, the same mistakes from the preceding programs are being done.

### **Differences between Piaget and Vygotsky's approaches**

It is my personal opinion that the three programs I mention: 1981, 1992, and 2004 are well based and structured, as I said before the first two based in Piaget's theory, and the third one, based in Vygotsky's theories; the problem then is not the basis but the



application to every day's work. The biggest problem is that the most important issues, "the whys" are being diminished, and "the what" is been worked on as the most important reason, giving as a result poor, empty, repetitive practices without clear meaning or purpose. On the other hand and even if the three programs are well structured, the theories in all of them are partially mentioned and they are completely out of context, thus understanding such theories is difficult since they have gone through an endless process of translation and /or interpretation, leaving as a result a hard to figure useless theory.

It is because of this reason that I consider extremely important to know from reliable sources the main theories of Lev Vygotsky and work them continuously until they become a routine of the teaching practice, at least the ones that can be more useful in our mission of teaching, and with the same purpose, establish the concrete differences between one and other approaches (Piaget/Vygotsky), to be able to recognize and define in the everyday chore, the purpose of what we should put into practice.

### **Vygotsky's early childhood education**

Lev Vygotsky was born in the U.S.S.R. in 1896, he is responsible for the Social Development Theory of Learning. He proposed that social interaction profoundly influences cognitive development. The central part of Vygotsky's theory is his belief that biological and cultural development do not occur in isolation.

Vygotsky approached development in a different way than Piaget. Piaget believed that cognitive development consists of four main periods of cognitive growth: sensory motor, preoperational, concrete operations, and formal operations. Piaget's theory suggests that development has an end point in goal.

Vygotsky, in contrast, believes that development “is a process that should be analyzed, instead of a product to be obtained”<sup>8</sup>. According to Vygotsky, the development process that begins at birth and continues until death is too complex to be defined by stages.

Piaget emphasized universal cognitive change; Vygotsky's leads us to expect highly variable development, depending on the child's cultural experiences and to the environment. “Piaget's theory emphasized the natural line, while Vygotsky favored the cultural line of development”.<sup>9</sup>

It is important to explain what characteristics the kindergarten child has from the Vygotsky's approach. The common definition of preschool age meaning literally prior to entering school; this term was used to describe a child up to the time he/she reached the age of seven or eight years. In this sense, the upper boundaries of the preschool age can be roughly equivalent to the end of early childhood. Preschool for Vygotsky is more than just a chronological concept; it is defined in terms of the systemic changes that take place in the structure of a child's mental processes and in terms of its major developmental

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<sup>8</sup> Riddle, E., (1999) Lev Vygotsky's Social Development Theory. (p.1)

<sup>9</sup> Riddle, E., (1999) Lev Vygotsky's Social Development Theory. (p.1)

accomplishments that emerge as a result of a child growing up in a unique social situation of development. According to Vygotsky, “some of the developmental outcomes and processes that were typically thought of as occurring naturally or spontaneously were, in fact, substantially influenced by children’s own learning or constructed learning, in turn, they were shaped by the social-historical context in which it took place.”<sup>10</sup>

Describing child development during preschool years, Vygotsky follows several major themes. One is the formation of a child’s mind as a dynamic system of mental functions with new higher mental functions emerging and changing in the already existing lower mental functions. The preschool age is the period when this formation goes through its initial stages when children use of language continues to transform their perception and begins to transform their attention, memory, and thinking. Other theme is the view of child development as the child overcoming the dependence on the environmental stimuli and becoming capable of intentional behaviors through the use of self-regulatory private speech and through participation in make-believe play. Another theme is the idea of child development being a holistic process with emotions and cognition acting in unity and affecting each other.

Vygotsky indicated that his views of mental development go beyond thought and language to include such issues as integration of emotions and cognition at the end of preschool years and a complex interplay of emotional and cognitive components in make-believe play. Finally, the last theme is the center to Vygotsky’s view of child

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<sup>10</sup> Bodrova, E & Leong, D. The Vygotskian approach in early childhood and primary classrooms. (p.6)

development- The idea of the social situation of development being the principle source of development.

During preschool years important changes take place in the very structure of mental processes. While most of the behaviors are still governed by natural or lower mental functions, the first signs of future higher mental functions emerge, first in play and latter on in other contexts. These first signs are displayed in behaviors that are mediated by language or other symbolic cultural tools. These cultural tools facilitate the acquisition of higher mental functions, symbol-mediated behaviors that may take different forms depending on the specific cultural context. “Higher mental functions exist for some time in a distributed or shared form, when learners and their mentors use new cultural tools jointly in the context of solving some task.”<sup>11</sup>

Of all mental functions perception becomes the first one to transform from a set of diffuse and disorganized sensations into the system of stable representations with culturally determined meanings.

## **Language**

The systemic organization of the preschooler’s mind is the outgrowth of the processes that take place during the previous early age and it is primarily associated with children’s mastery of speech.

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<sup>11</sup> Bodrova, E & Leong, D. The Vygotskian approach in early childhood and primary classrooms. (p.6)

With the use of language the ability to store and retrieve the images of the past is enhanced, and makes it possible to use past experience in a variety of situations, from communication to problem solving, thus placing memory in the center of cognitive function of preschoolers. Memory, the beginning of preschool age is the time when a child's mental functions become organized in a uniquely human and systemic way, designating memory as the dominant mental function of preschool age that will later be replaced by thinking in school aged children. Vygotsky notes that for younger children thinking is remembering, while for the older ones remembering is thinking.

Vygotsky describes the very first generalizations –typically appearing at the end of infancy and the beginning of toddler hood- as syncretism based on a child's general and undifferentiated emotional perception of an object or an action. As toddlers acquire larger vocabularies and larger repertoires of practical actions, their generalizations become tied to their perception, which transcend the limits of perceived characteristics of the objects to include characteristics that they can infer. These inferences are often based on children's past experience emphasizing the important role of memory plays in the mental functioning of preschoolers. Concept formation according to Vygotsky requires children's ability to use words or other signs in a specific instrumental function.<sup>12</sup>

Acquisition of specific cultural competencies such as literacy brings about a major change in children's use of words and other cultural tools. However, certain preparatory processes need to occur during preschool years for this mayor change to take

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<sup>12</sup> Learning and development of preschool children from the Vygotskian Perspective.

place. One of these processes is children's use of words and other signs- such as gestures- in a symbolic way. It takes several years of increasingly complex make believe play for children to become able to think of the words independently of the objects they denote.

Preschool age is the period when children's use of oral language undergoes the most dramatic change, children start to use their speech not only for communicating to others but also for communicating to themselves, a phenomenon now commonly referred to as private speech. Unlike Piaget who associated this phenomenon with children's egocentrism and considered it a sign of immature thinking, Vygotsky viewed private speech as a step on the continuum from public --social- speech to internal speech and eventually to verbal thinking.

Children start using private speech to accompany their practical actions. Later private speech becomes exclusively self-directed and changes its function to organize children's own behaviors. At the same time the form of private speech changes as well. From being audible the speech changes to a whisper and eventually becomes completely silent turning into inner speech. To onset of private speech marks an important point in the development of children's thinking, the beginning of verbal thought.

## **Self-regulation**

Another concept that plays a prominent role in Vygotsky's view of the preschool years is the self-regulation, which I will define next:

The concept of self-regulation is one of the most critical advances in child development that happens at this time, what changes in preschool years is the relationship between a child's intentions and their subsequent implementation in the actions. Younger preschoolers act spontaneously paying no attention to the possible consequences of their actions. By the end of preschool age, children acquire the ability to plan the actions before executing them guided by a mental image of the future actions.

Vygotsky writes about the development of self-regulation in preschoolers in two contexts- in relation to the development of private speech and in relation to the development of make believe play-. Private speech provides children with the tools; the same words that adults used to regulate children's behaviors can be now used by children themselves for the purposes of self-regulation.

Make-believe play provides a unique context that supports the use of self-regulation through a system of roles and corresponding rules.

Play, the real play, according to Vygotsky, has three major features; children create an imaginary situation, take on, and act out roles, and follow a set of rules determined by specific roles. Each of these features plays an important role in the formation of a child's mind, and in the development of higher mental functions. Role-playing in an imaginary situation requires children to carry on two types of actions- external and internal; these internal actions- operations on the meanings- are still dependent on the external operations on the objects. However, the very emergence of the

internal actions signals the beginning of a child's transition from the earlier forms of thought processes- sensory-motor and visual- representational- to more advance symbolic thought.

In younger children emotions follow actions, presenting children with a positive or negative feedback about the action and its results. In preschoolers, emotions start appearing prior to the action providing a special kind of anticipation of the possible consequences of this action. When children develop this emotional anticipation they become able to imagine what will happen if they do a certain thing, how it will make them feel, and how it will make other people feel. As a result, the cognitive actions of perception, imagination, thinking, and reflection acquire an emotional component, cognition becomes emotional.<sup>13</sup>

## **The Zone of the Proximal Development**

One of the scientist productions best known and most spread of Vygotsky is The Zone of the Proximal Development, which is defined as: “the distance between the actual development levels as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers”<sup>14</sup>

The common conception of the zone of proximal development presupposes an interaction between a more competent person and a less competent person on a task, such

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<sup>13</sup> Learning and development of preschool children from the Vygotskian Perspective

<sup>14</sup> The Zone of Proximal Development (p. 1)



that the less competent person becomes independently proficient at what was initially a jointly accomplished task. Zone of proximal development applies to any situation in which, while participating in an activity, individuals are in the process of developing mastery of a practice or understanding a topic. Within this general conception, three main aspects are often highlighted or emphasized: first, the general assumption that focuses on the idea that a person is able to perform a certain number of tasks alone, while in collaboration it is possible to perform a greater number of tasks, the number or kind of tasks must be taken as indicators to be interpreted in relation to a level of development.

The second aspect, the assistance assumption emphasizes how an adult, teacher or more competent person, should interact with a child. The notion of the zone of proximal development is little more meaningful than that of a learning situation presented to a child, where adults or more advanced children directly or indirectly have a positive influence on the child.

The third aspect, the potential assumption, focuses on properties of the learner, including notions of a learner's potential or readiness to learn. This aspect often seems to inspire the idea or expectation that it will be possible to greatly accelerate a child's learning. A student's zone of proximal development is the range of book readability levels that will challenge a student without causing frustration or loss of motivation.

To understand Vygotsky's explanation for the existence of proximal development, we have to consider his technical concept of imitation, around which his analysis is

constructed. A person's ability to imitate is the basis for a subjective zone of proximal development. Imitation, as used here, is not a mindless copying of actions, imitation presupposes some understanding of the structural relations in a problem that is being solved.

A child is not able to imitate anything; imitation is possible only to the extent and in those forms in which it is accompanied by understanding. Imitation refers to all kinds of activities of a certain type carried out by the child in cooperation with adults or with another child, and includes everything that the child cannot do independently, but which he can be taught, or which he can do with direction, or cooperation, or with the help of leading questions. The child can enter into imitation through intellectual action more or less, far beyond what he is capable of in independent mental and purposeful actions or intellectual operations.<sup>15</sup>

Regarding to the development that generates the instruction, Vygotsky says that the major reason for the development-generating effect of properly organized school training relates to students acquisition of the so-called "scientific concepts", which can be contrasted with the "spontaneous concepts" of preschoolers. Spontaneous concepts are the result of generalization of everyday personal experience in the absence of a systematic instruction. Therefore, such concepts are unsystematic, not conscious, and often wrong. "Despite their unscientific nature, spontaneous concepts play an important role in children's learning as a foundation for the acquisition of scientific concepts".<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The Zone of Proximal Development (p. 4, 5)

<sup>16</sup>Lidz, C & Gindis, B. Dynamic Assessment of the Evolving Cognitive Functions in Children.

The zone of proximal development is used for two different purposes in the analysis of psychological development: the transition from one age period to another and the other one is to identify the child's current state in relation to developing these functions needed for that transition. For each age period, there is a group of psychological functions that are maturing in relation to the central new-formation, and which will lead to the restructuring of the existing functions, to the formation of a new structure. This new-formation results in a transition to the next age period. Then we have, at present age the maturing functions, and at the next age the objective zone of proximal development. This zone is "objective" in the sense that it does not refer to any individual child, but reflects the psychological functions that need to be formed during a given age period, in order for the next age period to be formed.

The "objective zone" reflects the structural relationship that is historically-constructed and objectively constituted in the historical period in which the child lives, and it reflects the institutionalized demands and expectations that developed in a particular societal tradition of practice.<sup>17</sup>

Once I have mentioned the principal characteristics of preschool children and having explained the most important concepts Vygotsky handles, I will talk about the integration to regular schools to children with special educative needs, and how Vygotsky went ahead for almost 60 years to a concept relatively recent in North America and worked largely with this type of children changing the concept of the feasible.

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<sup>17</sup> The Zone of Proximal Development (p. 3)

The 2004 program in Mexico, in its second part of the pedagogical principles, mentions the urgent need to integrate children with special needs to regular schools; I am quoting the paragraph which talks about this:

“II) Diversity and Equity ... The teacher, school and parents must contribute to the integration of children with special educative needs to the regular school. The school, as a space of socialization and learning, must cause the equality of rights among children.”<sup>18</sup>

This concept started in Mexico as “a proposal” in the mid 90’s, and then, a few years later, as “a law”; but the putting this law into practice was erroneously initiated first, they sent children with special educative needs to the regular schools, and some time later, they began to integrate support teams (such as psychologist, language therapists, physic therapists, etc) to offer special service. Years later, they were faced with the impossibility to cover the spaces that were required for the children, and the government began to capacitate in a rush, regular teachers to cope with the deficiencies, and they integrated “itinerant’s teams” that were attending just for a day or two each school helping with the cases of children that required more attention.

Later, the introduction of changes in the school buildings began, such as access ramps and facilities for children with physical impediments, and while this changes, reforms, and organizations were happening, those who were directly in charge of these children -the teachers- had little or no instruction that prepared them for these drastic

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<sup>18</sup> Programa de Educacion Preescolar (2004). (p.32)

changes which had to be taken care of right then, before a contingency of having to give a fast solution, and the preparation of teachers to handle these cases continued without their understanding the “how” and the “why”.

The commentaries that were more often made, were that teachers did not just disagreed to assist these children, but also the fear, and in some occasions the terror of being unable to benefit them in any way, and to harm the rest of the students because teachers did not pay the same quality or quantity of time in their attention; and the biggest fear of all and the most justified one was to permanently damage the future chances of those special little children instead of solving their lacks and deficiencies.

Besides this, we have to add a great list of difficulties that students had to suffer like physical, mental, social, emotional, learning behavior, etc and making this list longer, we have to add the different grades and the intensity in which those problems presented themselves, the possibilities to cope with them increased without knowing the real causes.

Once again, just like the case of the Educational Programs I mentioned before, the request of the authorities to include children with special needs to regular schools did not only have a bad organization procedure when it was set into practice, but without the teachers knowledge of the theories which talk about the needs for special children to be attending regular schools gave resulted, in a great failure, despite the good intentions to make it work.

I consider it important to mention the opinions that Vygotsky has about these cases. Which is the main cause that Vygotsky points as the detonator of the problem? What does he call primary disability, and secondary disability? What is the right intervention of the school, and obviously how can the teacher solve and correct these cases?

To know the concepts, theories, and handling of these children could clear the vision and expectative for us teachers, and that would be a great, enormous help in our daily practices.

The field of remedial -special education- and school psychology was the source and testing ground for many of Vygotsky's innovative ideas.

There are two perfectly compatible ways of applying Vygotsky's theories to contemporary special education: "His General Cultural/Historical Theory (known in the West as Cultural-Historical Activity Theory- CHAT); and his special theory, less known outside of Russia, which Vygotsky himself called the "Theory of Disontogenesis" meaning the "Theory of Distorted Development"<sup>19</sup>

## **Theory of Disontogenesis**

The uniqueness of Vygotsky's approach lies in his perception of disability as a sociocultural development phenomenon. Breaking away from the common assumption

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<sup>19</sup> Remediation Trough Education. (p. 2)

that disability is mainly biological in nature, Vygotsky's insight was that the major problem of a disability is not the sensory or neurological impairment itself but its social implications: any physical handicap, not only alters the child's relationship with the world, but above all affects his interaction with people. Any organic defect is revealed as a social abnormality in behavior.

Within the context of this paradigm of the social nature of disability, Vygotsky introduced the concepts of the primary disability and secondary disability. A primary disability is an organic impairment. A secondary disability refers to distortions of higher psychological functions due to social factors. A biological impairment prevents a child from mastering social/cultural means and ways of acquiring knowledge at a proper rate, and in a socially acceptable form. It is the child's social environment, however, that modifies the course of development and leads to distortions and delays. If untreated, these conditions may effectively exacerbate the primary disability.

Expectations, attitudes, and the spiritual atmosphere created by society influence the access of a child with a disability to sociocultural knowledge, experiences, and the opportunity to participate in shared or joint activities with peers. That is why Vygotsky insisted on changing negative societal attitudes towards individuals with disabilities. He called for the identification of a disability in a child from the perspective of strengths, not weaknesses.

In “Defect and Compensation”<sup>20</sup>, Vygotsky wrote about the two-side nature of a handicap. This is the underdevelopment or absence of the functions related to an organic defect, and formation of an adaptive-compensatory mechanism. He stated that the most efficient compensation for the loss or weakness of natural functions could be achieved through the development of the higher psychological functions, and he said that the domain of higher psychological functions has no limit.

Vygotsky emphasized the dynamic nature of disability and argued that constant change in the structure and content of a disability takes place during development and under the influence of education remediation. According to him, these principles include internalization of external cultural activities into internal psychological processes in a series of qualitative, dialectic transformations, a complex process of integration and disintegration, gains, and losses. The essence and uniqueness of human development resides in its mediation by physical –material- instruments and social signs –language-.

Vygotsky discusses two classes of psychological functions. They are lower or natural; lower, like the biological predisposition of the child’s development, and higher or cultural, specifically human functions that appear gradually in the course of the transformation of natural functions through mediated activity and psychological tools.

According with this view, progressive divergence in social and natural development leads to social deprivation as society’s response to the child’s organic impairment. This, in turn, adversely affects the whole developmental process and leads to

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<sup>20</sup> Remediation through Education (p. 2)



an emergence of delays and deficiencies, the secondary handicapping conditions, as well as compensatory ways of coping.

Vygotsky clearly differentiated development of children with neurological organic base, or severe sensory, or physical impairment from those who were intact neurologically, physically, and sensorially but who had endured severe cultural deprivations and educational neglects. Using the terminology of that time, Vygotsky called the first group defectives, and the second group primitives, the latest category is retarded performers rather than retarded individuals.

Under the rubric of “child-primitive” Vygotsky described a psychological profile of students that today constitute a significant proportion of children with learning disability due to early childhood sociocultural deprivation, institutionalization or harmful environment conditions (war, poverty, displacement). For these students learning disability means the inability to use age-appropriate psychological tools such as cognitive language, as a means of reasoning, a tool of literacy, and to benefit from a mainstreamed educational environment. Vygotsky wrote, “A child whose development is impeded by a defect is not simply a child less developed than his peers but is a child who has developed differently”<sup>21</sup>

Vygotsky observed that traditionally, a child with a disability had been considered to be either underdeveloped, or developmentally delayed, or a regular child lacking a sensory organ. In other words, the difference between a child with a disability and his/her

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<sup>21</sup> Remediation Through Education. (p. 4)

non-disabled peers was considered to be only quantitative. Vygotsky disagreed; he insisted that the development of individuals with disabilities is not a slowed-down or missing variation of normal development. He pointed to two major differences in the development of a child with a disability in comparison with his typically developing peers. They are the formation of compensatory strategies (mechanisms) and the emergence of social complications due to the disability (secondary defect). No effective remediation is possible without an understanding of these qualitative differences.

Compensatory strategies are aimed at mastering psychological tools and using them to acquire cultural forms of behavior. When the direct way of acquiring psychological tools is blocked, compensatory strategies offer an indirect path to the same goal of cultural development. Through acquiring the psychological tools, a disabled child transforms his/her natural abilities into higher mental abilities, as do his/her non-disabled peers. Psychological tools are those “symbolic artifacts – signs, symbols, texts, formulae, graphic organizers – that being internalized help individuals master their own “natural” psychological functions of perception, memory, attention”<sup>22</sup> From a Vygotskian point of view the essence of cognitive education is in providing students with new psychological tools that can shape either general or more domain-specific cognitive functions, psychological tools can be acquired only in the course of special learning activities. Mediation of meaning is an essential moment in the acquisition of psychological tools, because symbolic tools derive their meaning only from the cultural conventions that engendered them. “Symbolic tools (e.g. letters, codes, mathematical signs, etc.) have no

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<sup>22</sup> Kozulin, A., *Psychological Tools and Mediated Learning* (p. 1)

meaning whatsoever outside the cultural convention that infuses them with meaning and purpose”<sup>23</sup>.

The assessment of children with handicapping conditions has been a socially and politically sensitive and emotionally charged issue for a long time. Dissatisfaction with the existing arsenal of evaluation tools and procedures has spurred the search for more useful alternatives. One of the most promising options is called "dynamic assessment", with Vygotsky being rightfully considered the "founding father" of this approach. Vygotsky noted that standardized intelligence tests inappropriately equalize natural and cultural processes. They are, therefore, unable to make the differentiation of impaired functioning that can be due to cultural deprivation, the result of organic damage, or a combination of both.

Although Vygotsky had no chance to elaborate on specific assessment operations, his notion of a "Zone of Proximal Development" has formed the foundation of a group of testing procedures now commonly recognized as "Dynamic Assessment". “This is an interactive procedure that follows a test-intervene/teach-retest format focusing on the cognitive processes and meta-cognitive characteristics of a child. Through an analysis of a child's pre-test and post-test performance following test-embedded teaching intervention, an evaluator can derive important information about the child's cognitive modifiability, his/her responsiveness to an adult's mediation and his/her amenability to instruction and guidance”<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> Kozulin, A., *Psychological Tools and Mediated Learning* (p. 7)

<sup>24</sup> *Remediation Through Education*. (p. 5)

Vygotsky wrote, "Different symbolic systems correspond to one and the same content of education...Meaning is more important than the sign. Let us change signs but retain meaning".<sup>25</sup> In Vygotsky's analysis, the essence of any remedial educational program is in the process of substituting signs while retaining the meaning of the internalization. The issue of specificity of psychological tools for remediation was the center of Vygotsky's attention. He pointed out that mankind has already developed different means, e.g., Braille, sign language, lip-reading, finger-spelling, etc. to accommodate the unique way of acculturation for a child with a disability by acquiring different symbolic systems -psychological tools-.

One of the most powerful reasons, besides the ones I mentioned before about the needs for us teachers of a thorough knowledge of -Vygotsky's Theories-, drove me to choose this topic to make my educative practice and those of my peers much better. It was the favorable impact course 827 had on me (Individual Differences in Learning), Course I attended during the 2004's fall at S.F.U. It was in that course that for the first time in my professional life I began to reason the concepts and theories that had been presented to me as an "already digested" issue, one that did not require any effort from me, but simply the repetition and memorization of information that had been offered to me as facts. Recognizing this gave me a shock; it was not only the fact that now I could understand it, but also that during the 23 years of my life as a teacher I did not see the necessity of it.

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<sup>25</sup> Remediation Through Education. (p. 6)

During that course I had the opportunity to analyze a video: The butterflies of Zagorsk, the famous school for students who are both deaf and blind in Zagorsk, this is a lasting tribute to Vygotsky's work. This school and their work are not very well known in the West but the BBC film has helped to disseminate information regarding the Russian advances in this area. Evidence of the applicability of Vygotsky ideas, as incorporated by his followers, was further demonstrated in 1977 when "four students who are both deaf and blind: Natalia Korneyeva (now Krylatova), Yuri Lerner, Sergei Sirotkin, and Alexander Surorov from the school in Zagorsk, graduated from Moscow University with degrees in psychology"<sup>26</sup>. Their academic success and the psychological/educational pedagogy is something that the rest of the world can learn from and attempt to incorporate. The education and socialization of individuals who are both deaf and blind is in need of a great deal of attention and revision in most countries of the world. More work needs to be done in disseminating this example and others done by followers of Vygotskian theories, but this is the beginning. Vygotsky used to said that "Deaf people can do anything but hear".

To start with this investigation, analyzing the concepts of Vygotsky about the preschool and putting emphasis in some of the most important, little by little the mental map of the configuration of the program was taking more sense to me. The "why" of the selection of this or that specific activity were answered. I realize that much actions taken with an specific intention of instruction, has been set in to practice without knowing deep down the educational benefits that contribute, and for that without the extraction of all the benefit that can be rescued.

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<sup>26</sup> Thomas, S., (2002). Vygotsky Contributions to Mentally Healthy Deaf Adults (p. 7)

Faults in the curricula, and the imprecision of the theories, can, in regular education, cause many problems. Those cases that require the intervention of special personnel to attend children with special educational needs become an even greater crisis.

As my own point of view, the reforms or amendments to preschool education are positive considering the curricular change, which is coherent and well based. Should preschool be mandatory? Should the students with special needs be in a regular classrooms? I believe these decisions should have been delayed until the time when the state can provide sufficient human and financial resources. However, we as teachers must know how to cope with the scarcity of the system; any socio-economical problem can be solved, except the lack of disposition and conviction.

## **CHAPTER III MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS**

### **Interrelationships in Human Resources**

Today's human resource problems and opportunities are enormous and appear to be expanding. Individuals dealing with human resource matters face a multitude of challenges, ranging from constantly a changing workforce to the ever-present scores of government regulations and a major technological revolution. Human resource development is the planned, continuous effort by management to improve employee competency levels and organizational performance to help individuals, groups, and the entire organization become more effective. Many interrelated factors affect human resource management. Such factors are part of either the external environment or its internal environment. And even though little or nothing can be done about the external environment, the interrelations that take place inside a working group can change if there is enough capacity to intercede to make them better and stronger.

Certain interrelationships tend to complicate the management of human resources. To perform their tasks properly, leaders need to recognize the different perspectives individuals bring to a situation. Understanding the many interrelationships is essential to resolving issues and problems. The cultural baggage that each person has affects the interrelations of a whole group, as each individual has values, beliefs, and habits that may differ from others and therefore generate conflicts.

Maturity and energy in our work is not granted freely to human beings but must be adventured and discovered, cultivated and earned. It is the result of application,

dedication, and above all a never-ending courageous conversation with ourselves, those with whom we work, and those whom we serve.

Usually, the person who possesses the highest hierarchy in any given group is the one who is responsible for pleasant relations among employees. Given this, the principal is responsible for creating meaningful relationships between individuals in the scholarly organization. When principals succeed in riding themselves of the boss image, the quality of the work increases, and it becomes easier to enjoy good relationships with those they manage. Everyone shares in the success, cooperation increases, power struggles diminish, and the whole issue of control melts away. What finally happens is that the quality of the work becomes very high, everyone feels more powerful, and the craving for power for the sake of power, which is so detrimental to production, becomes unnecessary.

Principals do many things for schools to help them achieve success. They shape the vision and mission of the entire organization; provide instructional leadership and nurture it in others; manage and administer complex organizational processes; outline the school culture and climate; build and maintain positive relations with staff, students, community and parents; and lead and support school improvement and change. If principals do not provide leadership in these arenas, the school is at risk of failure. They focus every day on the fundamentals of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional culture. The principal can enable democratic decision making, open communication, relationship structure, and the search for adequate resources in building an educative community. In this sense, the principal is the “bridge” to the community.



The finality of this project is to find a practical, useful and feasible way to make it easier to better interpersonal relations inside the working environment of a school. To accomplish this, I will analyze some theories: Arthur Combs, William Glasser's Choice Theory and Carl Jung's theories that talk about strategies that when used as tools will facilitate the process by understanding and recognizing the differences that exist among human beings and the motives which lead us to certain ways of behavior, and most important, that lead us to find ways to solve our interpersonal conflicts.

### **Arthur Combs' Theory**

We are social beings and we are free to be and become, when we feel loved, wanted, respected, and valued by others. Only when we have a deep sense of identification with others can we grow into the larger, non self-centered. Self that can be able to successfully minister to the learning needs of others.

What we believe about the nature of human beings and how they behave has implications in all aspects of our lives. These beliefs provide the basic assumptions from which we decide how to cope with people, whatever the setting. Our beliefs about people also affect the ways we regard ourselves and those with whom we interact. They determine how we raise our children, and treat our husbands, wives, or parents. They influence the structure of our institutions and what we expect the government do.

Dispositions of effectiveness are nurtured through experiences that are not only perceived as self-related but that are also engaging for the whole person –body- mind and spirit-. “Experiences that involve a physical investment (movement, touch, etc.), a mental

effort (thoughts, feelings, etc.) and a spiritual sense (inspiration, release, faith, etc.) are the most potent and contributory experiences for the nurturance of dispositional growth".<sup>27</sup>

There are two ways we may approach the question of what it means to be truly healthy, adequate, self-actualizing person. "We may attempt to describe what such people are like or we can seek to discover the dynamics of how such people get to be that way".<sup>28</sup> Each of these approaches is important to our understanding of such people. To provide the professional worker in human relations fields with effective guides for action, however, we need to know particularly the nature of processes producing adequate personalities. When we understand these causes, we may be in favorable position to establish the conditions by which increasing number of persons can be helped to achieve richer, more satisfying lives.

Perceptual-field psychology as explicated by Combs and other authors formulates basic principles upon which dispositions-centered teacher education programs may rest. The fundamental assumption of perceptual psychology is that all behavior of a person is the direct result of his/her field of meanings at the moment of behaving. Behavior at any instant is a function of how he/she sees self, the situation at hand, and the interrelationship of the two.

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<sup>27</sup> Dispositions of Teacher effectiveness (2004) The Third Annual Symposium on Educator Dispositions. (p. 2)

<sup>28</sup> Combs, A., (1962) Perceiving, Behaving, Becoming: A new focus (p.50)

In the school setting, these beliefs affect how teachers teach and leaders lead. It is crucially important, then, that leaders act from the most accurate concepts about human behavior. Aside from the family, education is the most person-centered of all institutions. And to fulfill their roles in education effectively, teachers and other school leaders must understand the fundamental assumptions of person-centered thinking.

Of all the perceptions existing for an individual, none are as important to behavior as those he/she has about self. Individuals are engaged in a continuous striving for fulfillment, the maintenance and enhancement of their unique self concept. This basic need for personal adequacy provides a built-in motivation for all people.

Based upon these fundamental assumptions human learning is thus defined as the exploration and discovery of personal meanings that enhance the richness, extent and availability of perceiving and adds to the meaning of subsequent perceiving.

Learning is facilitated by three essential elements:<sup>29</sup>

- Exposure to important information, experiences and resources.
- An atmosphere that encourages and facilitates involvement.
- Time and opportunity for exploration and discovery of personal meaning.

*Exposure to experience and information* is the phase of learning that has been developed most highly. Educators have developed and/or researched a number of important problems with direct bearing of the exposure phase. Questions of age

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<sup>29</sup> Dispositions of Teacher effectiveness (2004) The Third Annual Symposium on Educator Dispositions. (p. 3, 4)

appropriateness, articulation, scope and sequence have long been prime considerations of curriculum builders. In addition to the traditional concerns of curriculum development, personal-perceptual issues are crucial in this phase as well. The importance of the learner's needs, existing perceptual frameworks, self concepts, perceived threat or challenge, diversity and interests are of vital importance.

*Atmosphere* is created by the nature and quality of communicative events and settings. Questions about the effect of threat, level of empathy and acceptance, verbal and nonverbal communication, expectations, payoffs, open and closed communication, positive regard, authenticity, choice, self concept, success and failure, warmth and freedom are fundamental to the creation of an atmosphere conducive to learning. The creation and maintenance of this atmosphere is a prime responsibility of program faculty from beginning to end and it must spread through all program elements.

*Exploration and Discovery* does not happen in the absence of the first two conditions but is absolutely essential to human learning that makes a difference to the quality of perception, behavior and disposition. Time and opportunity for reconstruction of experience includes discussion, reflection, and discovery of the relationship of experience and information to the self of the learner. Providing adequate time and opportunity for such exploration has been historically the weakest link in teacher education.

A major problem for educational reforms is the gap between current practice and the best modern thinking about what people are like and how they learn. Unfortunately, most educational leaders are unaware of the person-centered movement or are not trained in its requirements. “Leaders behave in terms of their beliefs, thousands of beliefs. They especially hold beliefs about themselves, the people and situations they work with, and the purposes they seek to fulfill.”<sup>30</sup> In the light of that understanding, an educational leader’s growth must be seen as a lifelong task of personal being and becoming. It is a matter of developing beliefs about self, the people and tasks confronted, and the goals the leader wants to achieve.

Too often, most of the School cultures do not value and address people’s needs. Most school cultures do not even expect or encourage strong feelings and emotions. They don’t create environments where people communicate honestly and helpfully, where competition takes a back seat to collaboration. In fact, quite the opposite is too often true.

When we think of communication, most of us think almost at once of words, of talk. Communication, however, is much more than a matter of words; they are symbols which make possible the transmission of meanings. In themselves they lack by the impact to produce the necessary changes in meanings, required to changed behavior. Communication is a function of common meanings, the overlapping of the perceptual fields of communicator and communicates. It is a matter of acquiring common maps so that the meanings existing for one person may exist for others as well.

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<sup>30</sup> Combs, A., (1999) On becoming a school leader. A Person Centered Challenge (p. 11)

Because of the importance of language in daily life, most of us are eagerly aware of the verbal exchanges we engage in. But communication occurs without words too. Nonverbal communication may even be a far more powerful means of conveying meaning than a book full of words.

A great deal of what emerges between teacher and student or principal and teacher will be dependent upon the nonverbal aspects of the relationship they engage in. The educators must give attention to beliefs students and teachers hold, the sensitivity they develop, and the relationships they create with those they seek to help. These are the factors which determine in large measure the nature and effect of what is communicated in the helping dialogue.

When understanding fails to come about in human interaction, it is common to blame the other fellow. Communication is always an interaction, and the responsibility for its breakdown must lie in both persons. If others do not understand us, that is our fault and not theirs. "A major goal of helping is freeing people so that they will be able to enter into effective dialogue. It is part of the helper's job to find ways of helping his charges confront the world despite their fears and anxieties or outright resistance."<sup>31</sup> The creation of openness is, by itself, a goal of the helping process. Perceptions are within the individual and will not be brought out unless the climate outside is safe for them. No one can force them out. They come out only when the perceiver feels that he wants them to be presented, and he will not bring them out anywhere if there is danger that they will be attacked or ridiculed.

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<sup>31</sup> Combs, A., (1975) *Helping Relationships, Basic Concepts for the Helping Professions.* (p.253)

Clearly, establishing a school where true learning and change can occur is a difficult work for leaders. Yet educational leaders can serve as models for all the adults who also help to lead schools toward a vision of places of learning. For schools to become places where people come to grow, learn, change, expand, and find joy in discovery, everyone must be seen as a learner with needs to be met. The school's community needs to organize around a central theme of meeting people's needs.

To meet people's needs, learning must be challenging, not threatening, and it must be accompanied by a strong emotion and feeling so that learners can personalize their learning into new forms of understanding. Communication must be widespread; and it must be open, honest, caring, and helpful about what steps to take next.

In a school where concern for learning and change dominates the vision and the daily reality for school life, people see learning as a journey taken together in a climate that supports risk taking. The school arranges itself so that learning of all people is encouraged; honest communication through supportive dialogue links people in common, aligned goals; and all people feel included through the expectation of cooperative and collaborative work.

How leaders view themselves influences how they behave and how they communicate with other people. Views of self also influence how leaders perceive the teaching and learning process, and they determine how leaders interact with students,

teachers, and parents. Leaders who hold positive views of self are more likely to have positive views of other people in the learning environment.

Person-centered psychologists have identified three major characteristics of a healthy self. These characteristics allow school leaders to develop and lead a healthy school:<sup>32</sup>

- Having a positive view of self.
- Maintaining an openness to experience
- Possessing a feeling of oneness and identification with others.

*Positive Self-Concept*, self-concept is a person's unique organization of beliefs. Leaders, as any other person, have acquired beliefs about themselves throughout life, and these beliefs are central to their existence. Self-perceptions also have values attached to them. Leaders who see themselves as acceptable and capable behave as though they are. They expect to succeed. In opposition, leaders who believe they are inadequate are more likely to behave tentatively or fearfully, and they avoid situations that might prove embarrassing. Leaders who have positive self-concepts feel a greater degree of respect for their own uniqueness. They worry less about conformity and allow themselves to take risks and try innovative approaches because they feel adequate about themselves. When trying new approaches in curriculum, instructions, or scheduling, leaders who feel adequate are more likely to produce change instead of worrying about how much criticism they will receive from others.

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<sup>32</sup> Combs, A., (1999) On becoming a School Leader. A Person Centered Challenge (p. 95-116)



However, faced with demanding pressures, principals and other administrators often don't know where to run. Even the most secure principal can at times feel isolated and lonely. Principals are individuals with spiritual, emotional, and psychological needs. One negative comment from a supervisor, for example, can have a devastating effect on a school leader. Principals' jobs are difficult enough without adding coercive or threatening behaviors from supervisors. When people become self-concealing, they are afraid to share themselves because they fear being wrong or ridiculed for a particular thought or action. Such threatening practices frequently cause people to build walls around themselves, blocking out events and other people. This kind of behavior hinders the development of a positive self and is particularly disturbing as applied to school leaders.

*Openness to Experience*, a characteristic of a healthy self is accepting into awareness any and all aspects of reality, without denying it. Yet a willingness to confront the facts does not mean that a person is overcome by, or resigned to them. An individual's ability to be open to experience is directly related to a positive view of self and freedom from threat. A positive view of self means that an individual feels less of a need to erect defence mechanisms; thus, acceptance of reality is easier. Perceived threat narrows a person's viewpoint, causing him/her to overlook significant events. In opposition, staying open to all experiences allow individuals to seek more data that might be useful in making better decisions. Remaining open to experience may be very difficult for principals because they face conflict almost daily. Principals must learn how to face conflict without perceiving it as a personal attack on their integrity, beliefs, or decision-

making capabilities. Fear of making mistakes is common among school leaders. Principals realize that, in some cases, making a mistake can have devastating consequences.

A principal who is open to experiences is more likely to confront the problems, gather an abundance of data, and find comfort in not making a hurried decision. The data this kind of leader uses will be more accurate and less distorted. A principal who is open to experience try new methods, accepts the situation and simultaneously works to improve the problem over the long run.

*Identification with others*, effective leaders who have identification with others empathize with all of humanity without reference to gender, ethnicity, social status, or sexual orientation. They have a feeling of oneness with others, a feeling of belonging, and an extension of self that includes others. Because they have a genuine concern for the welfare of others, effective leaders are more attuned to the feelings of other individuals. Others will see this leader as trustworthy because of his or her high level of concern for them.

Effective leaders who have a feeling of oneness with others demonstrate sensitivity to their feelings and attitudes. They learn, through a great deal of experience and reflection, to be sensitive to the needs of children, parents, and teachers in the learning environment. Feelings of compassion are an integral part of these leaders' daily lives. Every day, principals face struggles of human existence in the lives of children and

staff. These issues take a heavy toll on the emotional states of school leaders, but compassion for these individuals and their problems is vital in establishing empathy. Leaders who have a strong identification with others are able to work harmoniously in a leader or follower role. School leaders need enhanced skills to work collaboratively with teachers, parents, and community. Within this context school leaders, at times, assume a follower role to develop leadership in others, because, effective leaders build relations with others and do not feel it necessary to always prove they are in control.

In Arthur Combs' Theory, the dispositions of effective teachers can provide a conceptual framework for the professional aspects of a Teacher Education Program and helps teachers and leaders to understand in the field of practice, where daily decisions are made, how to cop with problems in this centered-teacher education.

A dispositions-centered program is based on the basic assumption that people become teachers rather than simply learn how to teach. Defining teacher effectiveness as a matter of teacher dispositions puts the emphasis on helping people develop and nurture their personal belief systems to become teachers; to learn how to use themselves more effectively and efficiently in order to satisfy the learners, their own, schools, and society's purposes. They will have learned to be someone who knows and has skill in effectively helping others grow and learn.

As researchers and leaders gain experience in the new ideas, a new body of knowledge will develop that will raise the standards for what it means to understand and

be able to lead systems. That new body of knowledge will at first be deeply understood by the organizational groups who map their own relationships and roles. Over time, their maps will become shared with those maps of others, and a broadened community will emerge with shared mental models about managing complex change.

The most pressing problems people face today are human ones - how to grow satisfactorily as individuals on one hand, and how to interact successfully with others in the world, on the other. We live in the most interdependent, cooperative society the world has ever known. We depend on the goodwill and cooperation of millions of other people. Some of the greatest problems we face as individuals are those of human relationships at home, school, and work or as we are caught up in the dynamic forces of our complex social order. The world into which we are moving will require cooperative, responsible citizens who are knowledgeable about themselves and human interrelationships, and who are ready, willing, and able to put such knowledge to work.

The next theory, the William Glasser's model, involves the initiation of what he calls quality schools. Glasser contends that we must offer students and teachers an education that they can see will satisfy both their immediate and future needs. Teachers need to develop their notion of what makes up quality schools and how they would conduct themselves in such an environment.

When Choice's Theory is employed in educational settings, students have a more meaningful purpose in what they learn. Teachers negotiate both content and method with

them. Thus, how and what students learn come directly from their basic needs. In instruction, teachers tend to use cooperative, active learning techniques that enhance the power of the students. Students and teachers can come to understand each other better.

## **William Glasser's Choice Theory**

Although most people are not used to thinking about human behavior in terms of fundamental desires, knowledge of our basic necessities can help to gain insight into who we are and why we act the way we do. When we analyze basic human needs, we can figure out how individual behaviors and life goals are connected to them. Because the needs indicate the path of psychological growth that we have to take in order to become who we want to be, they can help us think about what we require in order to gain value-based happiness. The basic needs also provide a powerful tool for analyzing the behavior of others. If we want to know what people will do, we should find out what their aspirations are and predict that they will try to satisfy their needs.

The needs as defined by Glasser are a need for security, acceptance, power, pleasure and freedom. Control theory teaches us that all human behavior is us doing our best to have these five needs met. These will be discussed in detail later in this section.

Our basic needs have an evolutionary origin, but they are significantly modified by culture, beliefs, and individual experiences. What we desire is largely determined by our genes, but how we fulfill our desires is mostly determined by culture and experience.

When people begin to think in terms of behaviors, they can see that they choose these behaviors and have the option to change them. The most direct way to change a behavior is to change the behavior's doing and thinking components. "We have almost total control over the doing component of behavior and some control over the thinking component; we have less control over the feeling component and very little control over physiological phenomena"<sup>33</sup> Behavior in its totality ultimately gives us control over all components. When we change what we are doing, we will notice that our thoughts, feelings, and physiological responses change as well. A choice of action that results in greater control will be accompanied by better feelings, more pleasant thoughts, and greater physical comfort. To get their needs met effectively, people must realize that they always have control over the doing component and can choose to do something more effective than being dissatisfied.

Obtaining the knowledge of these needs may facilitate and enrich the relations within the working environment. Your desire profile affects how you relate to people at work. If you have a significantly different desire profile than your boss, for example, your boss will tend to misunderstand you, and you will tend to misunderstand your boss. You can significantly enhance your understanding of people at work by comparing your desire profile with theirs. Your need profile affects not only how you react to the people at work but also how you react to the work itself. Certain types of work are well-suited to satisfying your basic needs, whereas other types of work are poorly suited and may interfere with your efforts to satisfy your requirements. When you have a job that

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<sup>33</sup> Choice Theory (2005) Choice theory site map. (p.5)

satisfies your needs, you tend to feel fulfilled by your work. When you have a job that interferes with your desires, you may feel trapped by your job and may even hate going to work every day.

A central aspect of Choice's Theory is the belief that we are internally, not externally motivated. While other theories suggest that outside events cause us to behave in certain predictable ways, Choice's Theory teaches that outside events never make us to do anything. What drive our behavior are internally developed notions of what is most important and satisfying to us. These internally created notions of how we would like things to be are related to certain basic needs built into the genetic structure of every human being. The basic needs which provide the foundation for all motivation are:

“The need to survive, the need to belong, the need to gain power, the need to be free, and the need to have fun”.<sup>34</sup>

We fulfill the need to belong by “loving, sharing, and cooperating with others. We fulfill the need for power by achieving, accomplishing, and being recognized and respected. We fulfill the need for freedom by making choices in our lives. And we fulfill the need for fun by laughing and playing”<sup>35</sup>

The value in learning about total behavior is that it enables people to choose behaviors to satisfy their needs more effectively. While our underlying motivation is always an attempt to satisfy one or more of the five basic needs, few of us are actively

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<sup>34</sup> What is Choice Theory? (2005) the William Glasser Institute (p.1)

<sup>35</sup> Choice Theory (2005) Choice theory site map. (p.3)

aware that these needs exist. What we know is how we feel, and we always want to feel as good as we can. “When we are lonely and miserable, we do not complain that our need for belonging is unsatisfied: we look for a friend. When we are hungry, we do not complain that we are having difficulty surviving: we look for a meal. We look because we know we will feel good when we find what we are looking for, not because we think we have to satisfy this need or that”<sup>36</sup>.

What gives us our different personalities is that our five basic or genetic needs differ in strength. Some of us have a high need for love and belonging. Others have a high need for power or freedom. “The strength of each need is fixed at birth and does not change”<sup>37</sup>. The differences in people’s personalities is striking, some may be outgoing, gregarious, optimistic, liberal, and fun loving. Others may be sober, quiet, conservative, pessimistic, controlling or gloomy. The variations are endless.

Inside a working environment, there are several things which can be done to accomplish better interpersonal relations among its members, to increase productivity of all employees and the service they offer. One of them, maybe the most important is the attitude of the one person who is in command; I will talk about some of the differences that Glasser (1998)<sup>38</sup> establishes between Boss Management and Lead Management.

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<sup>36</sup> Glasser, W. (1992). *The Quality School. Managing students without coercion.* (p.58)

<sup>37</sup> Glasser, W. (1998). *Choice Theory. A New Psychology of Personal Freedom.* (p.91)

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid* (284-292)



## **Boss Management**

Glasser says that Boss Management is not complicated. Reduced to its essentials, it contains four elements:

- 1- At all levels, the boss sets the task and the standards for how well the work is to be done and rarely consults workers in this process. The boss fights long and hard for the right to boss without interference. The more he or she bosses, however, the lower quality of the work.
- 2- The boss usually tells, rather than shows the workers, how the job is to be done, and rarely asks for their input as to how the job could be done better.
- 3- The boss inspects the work. Because the workers are not involved in this evaluation, most do only enough to get by and inspectors are continually under pressure to pass low-quality work. This is a deadly quality-destroying combination. Furthermore, in a boss-driven environment, workers who do more than they have to are ostracized by their coworkers.
- 4- When the workers resist the boss, as they almost always do in a variety of ways that compromise quality, the boss uses threats and punishment to try to make them do what he or she wants. In so doing, the boss creates a workplace in which, from top to bottom, the managers and workers are adversaries and fear rules. The boss thinks this adversarial relationship is the way things should be; cooperation with workers is a subversive idea.

## Lead Management

On the other hand, Lead managers know that the core of quality is managing workers so they put the manager; each other; the work and the customers into their quality worlds. That is, all who are involved must get close and stay close. Good relationships are the key in the workplace. There are four elements of lead management:

- 1- Lead managers engage all workers in an ongoing honest discussion of both the quality and the cost of the work that is needed for the company to be successful. They not only listen but continually encourage the workers to offer them any suggestions that will improve quality.
- 2- The lead manager models the job so the workers can see exactly what the manager expects. The workers are encouraged to give input into how their jobs may be done better. In this way, the manager works to increase the workers' control over their jobs.
- 3- The workers are responsible for inspecting their own work with the understanding that they know best what high quality work. High quality depends on a level of trust between workers and managers that cannot be achieved by bossing.
- 4- Lead management uses every chance to teach that the essence of quality is continual improvement. The managers make it clear that their task is to facilitate improvement by providing the workers with the tools, training, and a friendly place to do the work.

Most of the tangible workplace problems could be substantially reduced by a change to lead management. “The better the relationship the workers have with their managers, the less complaint will surface or persists”<sup>39</sup>. Among the most destructive of all our coercive practices is our excess of personal criticism. We spend too much time telling people we manage that what they are doing is wrong, that they should have done something else in the past instead of what they did, and that their plans for the future are faulty. When we criticize, we often have the advantage of second guessing, which makes our position safe but increases the anger of those criticized. The problem with criticism is that it persuades the people we criticize to take us out of their personal space. They see our criticism, constructive as we think it is, as an attack. It is not constructive to them.

Fortunately for every problem there is a solution, and for every negative attitude there is a positive one that should take its proper place. Glasser presents a comparison of seven Caring habits and seven Deadly habits:<sup>40</sup>

<b>Seven Caring Habits</b>	<b>Seven Deadly Habits</b>
Supporting	Criticizing
Encouraging	Blaming
Listening	Complaining
Accepting	Nagging
Trusting	Threatening
Respecting	Punishing
Negotiating differences	Bribing or rewarding

Most successful managers have the luxury of discharging non-productive workers and looking for better replacements. School managers do not have this option. The biggest problem of managing arises when we try to control other people, and when we

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<sup>39</sup> Glasser, W (1969) School Without Failure (p. 41)

<sup>40</sup> What is Choice Theory? (2005). The William Glasser Institute (p.1)

fail it is usually because we depend too much upon the coercive methods of the boss-manager. “Most of us do not realize that no matter how much coercion we use, we cannot consistently control other people: In fact, it is an axiom of control theory that the only person any of us can consistently control is ourselves”<sup>41</sup> Therefore, the basis of effective lead-managing is to deal with others knowing that you cannot control them, that all you can do is give them the kind of information that has a good chance of persuading them, that the work you ask them to do will feel good as they do it.

In practice, workers do not work to satisfy their needs; most do not even know what their needs are. What they want is what we all want, to feel good. If we can help them to feel good, they will listen very carefully to what we ask them to do and, most of the time, they will do it. When others do as we ask, it is because they find it more satisfying than anything else they can do at the time. Instead of accepting this axiom and concentrating on managing so that workers can satisfy their needs while doing what we ask, we try again and again to make others do as we want, regardless of how satisfying it may or may not be for them.

As we manage workers, we need to be aware that there are two important aspects of feeling good: “immediate and delayed”<sup>42</sup>. We all like to feel good all the time, but, as we grow, we find out that it often pays to endure some immediate short-term pain in order to have a good chance for some latter long-term pleasure. Slowly and carefully the manager must help the worker, at the beginning of the job, to gain at least a little short-

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<sup>41</sup> Glasser, W. (1992). *The Quality School. Managing students without coercion.* (p.73)

<sup>42</sup> Glasser, W. (1992). *The Quality School. Managing students without coercion* (p.74)

term satisfaction by providing what the worker appraises is a good place to work. From this, and from caring, the lead manager can eventually build up to the point that the worker is willing to wait for the long-term satisfaction involved in doing a quality job. Once the workers gain the confidence in the manager's ability to provide the leadership necessary for their long-term satisfaction, they become more and more willing to put up with short-term pain and frustration.

In order to be more effective in dealing with, working with, and managing other people, one must be alert to the little tips of the psychological icebergs that we all carry around. They give us insight into why people behave the way they do. Unless we understand the core of beliefs a person carries, we are not likely to be successful in managing others. Once a manager learns something about the central assumptions, beliefs and expectations a co-worker or subordinate has. Watching for evidence by listening, observing, asking or testing, people's reactions to our proposals or conversations, the manager can assess whether or not the assumptions provide a basis for behavior that aligns with the objectives of the organization. As long as the manager ignores the values that shape and generate behavior, he will be negating the human side and, worse, guessing at why they are behaving the way they are, and guessing is not managing.

The last Theory which I'm going to present, Carl Jung's Psychological Type, seeks to help those who use it gain a greater understanding of themselves as well as respecting those with different characteristics. Without a workable understanding of ourselves and others, and some knowledge of how we fit into the world around us, we are

likely to experience frustration, miscommunication and lack of fulfillment. Developing an understanding of differences, both for ourselves and for our co-workers, could be the most important task we have, as this affects the quality of our actions and experiences in life.

The teachers can start by using the material to indicate their personality pattern, and to highlight the strengths of their own style, because everything we feel, perceive, think, and do is based on our subjective view of reality, which may be significantly different from other. Therefore, in order to understand people, we need to understand them from the inside.

### **Carl Jung's Psychological Type Theory**

Life presents a series of problems and conflicts. We have so many different beliefs, values, and ideas about how the world should be that it is inevitable that some of the interactions we have with others will result in conflicts or problems. While some people view problems as opportunities for growth, others view them as a dilemma. The likelihood of resolving something seen as a burden is quite low.

People in conflict typically engage in a specific type of communication which attacks the other person. They make statements such as, "You make me angry!" "You're too sensitive!" "If it weren't for you..." "You always do that!" Then both people are off and running into an argument that is separated from the original issue. The problem does not get solved and a new one is created. And both people feel hurt or angry.

The language of problem-solving focuses on attacking the problem, not the person. It expresses a desire for a mutually acceptable solution that achieves both parties' goals. Open, honest feelings, facts, and opinions are expressed by both parties. There is a shared responsibility to ask questions and to seek clarification on the issues. An important part of getting clarification and accurately defining the problem is through feedback.

People are complex. The environment and other people working with them could influence behaviour change on a regular basis. Behaviour has reasons not causes and if we understand the reasons why in most areas we will be more committed. Many change management efforts treat individual people in the organization as if they are all the same and no different than the resource lines in a project plan. Communication needs, what causes us stress, how we manage, lead, and change situations are related to our ability to deal with change. Organizations that take these differences into account have a much greater chance of mobilizing successful changes.

Understanding and developing the self and others is an important step in creating better conditions for human beings operating in any organization.

Psychological Type is a theory developed by Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung, the founder of analytical psychology. Jung used Psychological Type to describe and explain the patterns observable in normal behavior. Psychological type gives a snap shot of the preferred behaviour that comes almost unconsciously to most people. This is the behaviour that they are comfortable with and can sustain for long periods of time.

Psychological type is a powerful aid in our quest for excellence. It is a model that will help you to expand your understanding of human nature. An improved understanding of yourself and others will help you find, follow or expand your path. Carl Jung identified a process of personal growth that he called individuation, which is essentially the conscious realization of your true self, beyond the ego that is presented by your conscious self.

We as human beings experience phenomena in four ways. That is, we orientate ourselves to the world through four separate lenses. O'Connor (1985) exposes different points of view through history.<sup>43</sup>

Plato, in his Republic, observed this fourfold character and referred to it as four facilities of the soul:

- Demonstration
- Opinion
- Imagination
- Intelligence

Galen, the ancient Greek physician, also discovered this fourfold temperament with his typology of:

- Melancholic (earth)
- Choleric (fire)
- Phlegmatic (water)
- Sanguine (air)

What Jung has done some twenty-three centuries after Plato is to independently come upon the same fourfold division; Jung called these functions:

- Thinking

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<sup>43</sup> O'Connor, P. (1985). Understanding Jung Understanding Yourself (p.57)



- Feeling
- Sensation
- Intuition

In short, they can be best seen as being like a compass or road map, with which we orientate ourselves to both the inner and outer world.

Jung made a major contribution to the ability to understand self and others by dividing all human behavior into two basic categories: perception and judgment. His theory is that we are constantly choosing between the open act of perceiving, and the closed act of judging. Jung maintained that individuals prefer to perceive either through their senses or their intuition, and prefer to make judgments either through their thinking or feeling processes. Although all four functions: Sensing, Intuition, Thinking and Feeling, are present in every individual, one is dominant or most favored, one is auxiliary and ranks as the second most used function, and the third is the tertiary function, which is less often exercised and demands more energy to use. The fourth is a person's inferior function. The inferior function, sometimes called the shadow function, is the most tyrannical and immature function and is the person's weak spot<sup>44</sup>.

“The mind, through its physical counterpart, the brain, has inherited characteristics or innate predispositions with which to respond to life's experiences”<sup>45</sup>. These innate behavioral patterns are what Jung has termed archetypes, which mean an original model. “Archetypes are simply the predisposition to act, into which we pour

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<sup>44</sup> Mamchur, C (1996) Cognitive Type Theory & Learning Style. A teacher's guide. (p.2)

<sup>45</sup> O'Connor, P (1985). Understanding Jung Understanding Yourself (p.18)

specific images from life's experience".<sup>46</sup> Archetypal images hold out the great possibility of making conscious certain deeply held and felt unconscious forces. In this way, they further the psychological evolution of Self and thereby the psychological evolution of mankind. In the image form some contact can be made with archetypal forces, and man can take one small step toward self-realization.

*Thinking* is a rational function that seeks to apprehend the world by thought logical inference and cognition. Thinking is characterized as preferring to be analytical. Thinking decisions tend to be based on more objective criteria and facts. Thinking (T) seeks rational order and plan according to impersonal logic.

*Feeling* has to do with values. It tells whether a thing is acceptable, agreeable or not. It is the function that weighs and values. It is a rational function, since it requires an act of judgment and considers the implications for people. Feeling (F) seeks rational order according to harmony among subjective values.

*Sensation* is the function or mode of action by which we realize that a thing actually exists. It is perception through our five senses. Sensation (S) seeks the fullest possible experience of what is immediate and real.

*Intuition* is fundamentally concerned with time. It is the function that tells us of future possibilities. It is sometimes seen, as unconscious perception as opposed to sensation, which can be seen as conscious perception. Intuition is an irrational function,

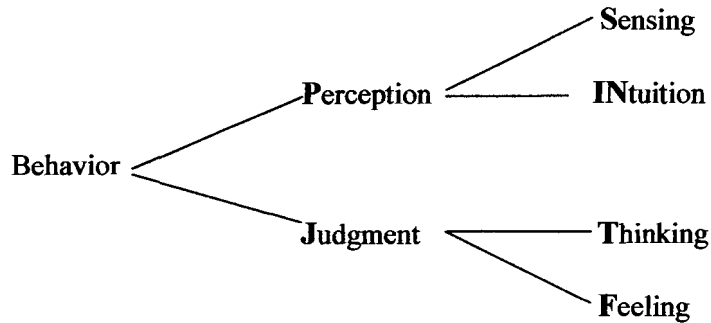
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<sup>46</sup> O'Connor, P (1985). Understanding Jung Understanding Yourself (p.18)

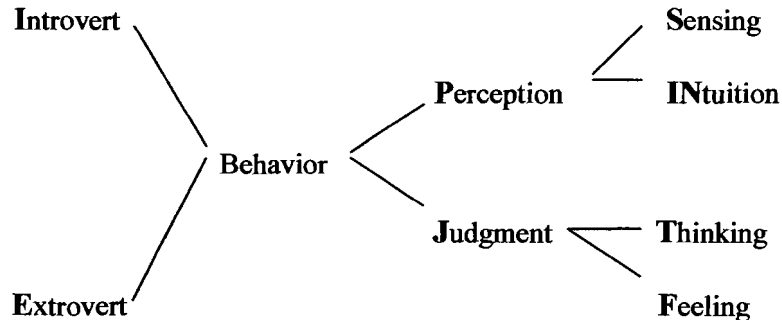
because the conclusions that are arrived intuitively cannot easily be accounted for.

Intuition (N) seeks the broadest view of what is possible and insightful.

Graphically, experts have presented the four functions of type in this way:



Jung added the final component of Extraversion and Introversion to his matrix:



To determine type preferences, one must use the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. This instrument was designed by Briggs and Myers to help individuals to understand their own preferences and the preferences of others. It can provide a means of identifying the different modes for interacting with others, taking in information from the world around us, making decisions based on the information we gather, and organizing and structuring our world and our lives. Understanding the differences between the types give

the power to increase communication, become a better team member, manage others more effectively, use conflicts in a positive way, improve interpersonal relationships and become more effective both, personally and professionally.

### Myers-Briggs Type Indicator...

The indicator has four scales. **Extroversion – Introversion (E-I)**, **Sensing - Intuiting (S-N)**, **Thinking - Feeling (T-F)**, and the last is **Judging - Perceiving (J-P)**. Each type is identified by four letters which together form sixteen different types.

### Sixteen Different Types

<b>ENFJ</b>	<b>ENFP</b>
<b>ENTJ</b>	<b>ENTP</b>
<b>ESFJ</b>	<b>ESFP</b>
<b>ESTJ</b>	<b>ESTP</b>
<b>INFJ</b>	<b>INFP</b>
<b>INTJ</b>	<b>INTP</b>
<b>ISFJ</b>	<b>ISFP</b>
<b>ISTJ</b>	<b>ISTP</b>

The developed theory is that every individual has a primary mode of operation within four categories:

- 1- Extraverted or Introverted: Our flow of energy
- 2- Sensing or Intuitive: How we take the information
- 3- Thinking or Feeling: How we prefer to make decisions
- 4- Judging or Perceiving: The basic day-to-day lifestyle that we prefer.

*Introversion or Extraversion*, as the typical attitude, means an essential bias which conditions the whole psychic process, establishes the habitual mode of reaction, and thus determines not only the style of behaviour but also the quality of subjective experience. “Extraversion is an outward focusing of energy and interest which causes the character to seek outside influences as a source of energy and interest and pleasure and satisfaction. Introversion is an inward focusing, which causes the person to look inwardly as a source of energy and satisfaction and safety”<sup>47</sup>

*Sensing or Intuitive*, indicate how a person prefers to receive data and how to process it once they have it. “The sensing character pays careful attention to each detail in his/her immediate environment in a very practical, focused way. Sensing characters will trust experience more than theory or experts. Intuition makes sense of the world by creating patterns and inventing hypotheses and to scan data in order to see relationships between things.”<sup>48</sup>

*Thinking and Feeling* are the judging functions. They are used to make rational decisions concerning the data they received from their perceiving functions. Thinking decisions tend to be based on more objective criteria and facts. Feeling, which refers to subjective criteria and values, strives for harmonious relationships and considers the implications for people. “Thinking characters can be stereotypically portrayed as impersonal, ignoring the feelings of others, preferring to deal in the world of ideas and

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<sup>47</sup> Mamchur, C. *The Archetypal character*, chapter one (p. 4- 13)

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* (p. 21-32)

abstract thought or logical consequences rather than the murky world of feelings and emotions. Feeling characters can be stereotypically portrayed as soft-hearted, over emotional beings that flood the page or screen with sentiment and empathy.”<sup>49</sup>

*Judging and Perceiving* tells us which of the two preferred functions is used in the outer world. Those who prefer Judging use their preferred judging function in the outer world and their preferred perceiving function in the inner world, and those who prefer Perceiving use their preferred perceiving function in the outer world and their preferred judging function in the inner world. “*Perceiving* is here understood to include the processes of becoming aware of things, people, occurrences and ideas. *Judgment* includes the processes of coming to conclusions about what has been perceived. Together, perception and judgment make up a large portion of a person's total mental activity. They govern much of their outer behavior, because perception -by definition- determines what people see in a situation and their judgment determines what they decide to do about it. Thus it is reasonable that basic differences in perception or judgment should result in corresponding differences in behavior.”<sup>50</sup>

Each personality type has a different idea of what it means to be successful. Self-knowledge is one common goal that will help everyone achieve personal success. So many people are hung up on somebody else’s idea of what it means to be successful, and they are unaware of what is truly important to them. This is normal; we all have important role-models and influencers in our lives that may have quite different basic

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<sup>49</sup> Mamchur, C. *The Archetypal character*, chapter one (p. 42-50)

<sup>50</sup> Psychological type. Wikiquote, (p. 3)

values from our own. If we spend our time and effort trying to meet somebody else's idea of success, and ignore any conflicting messages from our own psyche, then we will find ourselves exhausted and unhappy. Realizing what is truly important to us is a major step towards achieving personal success. As we learn about our personality type and the types of others, we are empowered with an understanding of why people react different in different situations. When put into the context the Psychological Type, we can better accept and understand people's behaviors that are different from ours.

## **CHAPTER IV, CONCLUSIONS**

### **Mexico's Context: School's practices to achieve success**

For me, having the opportunity to get a Master's in Education at Simon Fraser's University has widened the perspective of my actions. The ways in which I have changed have been huge; I am literally speaking of a new universe of possibilities and knowledge to which I had no access before.

As a part of the scholarship granted by educational authorities in Mexico, when I return to Chihuahua, I am expected to inform and educate the teachers, principals and supervisors in such a way that they can participate in many of the ideological experiences I have had the privilege to learn in Canada. This project is based on the selection of those issues which I considered the most significant to make our every day work better, and those which will be feasible to be adapted to the present conditions in Mexican schools. The topics which I intend to share with my superiors and fellow teachers seem to match the efforts done by the Mexican government which is presently taking action to put into practice certain practices at all the levels of service in education to make it better. Some of the most important practices will be described in the following paragraphs.

There is a customary practice to hold monthly meetings with the managing and teaching personal to discuss matters related to pedagogic problems, the main reason for this is that school administrators are no longer expected to be merely managers of routines, now they must be prepared to take initiatives. In schools where the working environment is healthy, the principal must understand and deal with change as well as



manage it. Openness to diversity, conflict, reflection and mistakes becomes a necessity. In the facilitative role of fostering collaboration and collegiality, the principal must motivate staff to be dynamically interactive, professionally effective and mission oriented. Thus, knowledge of professional and organizational development and strong interpersonal and communicative skills are critical components.

In order to address these increasingly complex responsibilities, some principals have created communities of staff learners. Those principals use their leadership role to demonstrate and encourage continuous learning for themselves and all staff members in order to increase the effectiveness of their school's work. To do this, teachers meet once a month for a full school day in sessions where teachers brainstorm ideas, discuss readings, analyze data, and plan their next steps. They usually recognize the need and the benefits of in-depth professional talk. During those short meetings, team members provide updates, share progress, and sometimes express and comment frustrations of the daily practice, share their work and offer support and suggestions. This has been a valuable component of stretching teachers in directions that they may not have discovered on their own and in establishing new patterns of professional relationships.

Each team has a moderator and the principal usually take this role. The moderator's job is to provide a loose structure for the meetings, take care of meeting arrangements, listen and participate actively. Because these meetings are based on constructivist learning principles, the teachers are responsible for their own learning. They decide how far and how fast to go with their research. They collaborate and monitor

each other's progress. They encourage and support each other. Moderators may offer a comment, summarize a conversation, or provide a question, but their job is to discover ways in which to support the teachers' work. In this way the moderator is really conducting action research about teacher's development. Glasser's notions of needs satisfaction and of lead management could prove crucial here.

In these sessions, teachers raise their own questions, ones that have meaning and immediacy for them. They seek their own answers in their own classrooms with their own students. Since the collaboration is so important to the meetings, teachers on a team coordinate the ways in which they obtain additional professional development. Teams have made visits to other schools and have attended workshops and conferences together. These common experiences solidify relationships, support extended learning, and nourish conversations and understandings. Teachers who understand the importance of what they learn from their action research want to share their results with other teachers. Knowledge of their personality type will be invaluable in this domain. Teachers and principals can better communicate, make decisions together and develop projects according to their dominant function preferences.

Another modality established in Mexico to obtain the best educative quality is an organism known as "Carrera Magisterial" which consists in the application of a once a year exam to those teachers who wish to present it, and it gives teachers a possibility of promotions and/or better salaries. The exam is suitable for school's work and the responsibilities of the teacher in daily practice; that is, teachers, principals and

supervisors present a different exam, each one of them in accordance with the material, levels of schools, and issues which have to be tested. Hopefully, my understanding of Vygotsky will be helpful in determining issues of importance to the education of the young.

In addition, there are actualization workshops offered to teachers twice a year; they are provided in extra curricular hours. The selection of the issues and material to be taught in those workshops falls in the hands of well prepared, specialized personnel devoted to the professional improvement of teachers. The attendance to those laboratories also gives the opportunities for promotions and/or better salaries. It is my hope to present my ideas here.

Hypothetically, if teachers worked in these modalities systematically, many of the actual problems in the quality of education Mexico is offering in its schools would not exist. Nevertheless in practice not all the moments of study and deliberation are used to optimize them. Some of those hours that should be used to promote reflection and analysis are turned into social reunions or a free day to get out of work at an earlier hour to go on any personal errands they wish to.

In some cases, the recently acquired contents which are being set into practice during the school year get lost and their goals are set aside until there are no goals to be reached; other problems frequently arise because the teachers do not like to give their personal time for free to anything that has something to do with pedagogy; they do not

like to read to reach the most advanced facts about teaching techniques; some of the teachers even object the fact that they would have to read, study, and analyze theories and backup materials which are not specified as “mandatory”

I mention such attitudes, not with an intention to mean that all the teachers are not trying to get information by and for themselves, or that some management officials do not promote moments of reflection and study, since of course there are many cases where teachers set excellent examples of professionalism and generally those cases are from teachers who really love what they are doing and try to grow in the development of their teaching careers since they realize they are the formers of the young human beings that have their first encounter with formal knowledge. Once again, the mission for this goal to be reached falls in the management hands, but if they do not have a leadership capacity, nothing will be done to make every day’s practice walk ahead, and all the people who expect to be guided by their leading officials will not be able to advance in the correct direction. I think the attendance to those laboratories and workshops should be considered as very important, as a priority and should also be estimated as obligatory and should also have a systematic way for testing the results. Hopefully offering ideas that are personally meaningful as well as educationally sound will encourage teachers to attend and become meaningfully engaged.

## **Planning the Workshops**

Having all these facts in mind, the next step should be to design a way to organize the leading of the workshops with the topics which I mention in my project; I consider

that the good planning of activities will be the most adequate way to advance on the proposed issues, I also have to research on the levels of studies and interests of the groups of teachers and management who will participate in the laboratories.

Implementation is the most difficult and most important part of strategic management. No matter how creative and well formulated the strategic plan, the organization will not benefit if the plan is incorrectly implemented. Strategy implementation involves several dimensions of the organization -the school in this case-. It requires changes in the organization's behaviour. This can be brought about by changing one or more organizational dimensions, including management's leadership ability, organizational structure, information and control systems, and human resources. Involving employees in formulating the strategy makes implementation easier because they understand and are committed to the strategy they helped to design.

Planning a workshop first involves making decisions about what topics to select. How can teaching a theory be best integrated into the present program? How can you illustrate it with examples? The decisions should be based in the project's schedule in accordance with the purposes of the course's components. In general, appropriate goals are to help teachers understand a theory by seeing observable and verifying concepts, to have them go through research and design processes, to help them improve their powers of reasoning by manipulating cause and effect relationships.

When planning the course schedule, it is essential to coordinate the teaching of concepts with their applications in the practice, because theory should be closely followed by relevant practice. The level of the students, of course, influences how much can be expected to derive theories and synthesize material on their own.

## **Workshops Moderator Actions**

As the moderator of the workshops I will be in charge of activities such as:

- Plan, evaluate, and revise curricula, course contents, and course materials and methods of instruction.
- Prepare course materials such as syllabus, homework assignments, and handouts.
- Initiate, facilitate, and moderate classroom discussions.
- Prepare and deliver lectures on related topics.
- Collaborate with colleagues to address teaching and research issues.
- Supervise teaching, and research work.
- Keep abreast with development in the field by reading current literature and talking with colleagues.
- Compile, administer and grade examinations or assignments. Evaluate and grade teacher's class work and papers.

During the realization of the workshops to train and teach, the educational needs of others must be identified to develop formal programs for classes to make them feasible by:

- Identifying information by categorizing, estimating, recognizing differences or similarities, and detecting changes in circumstances or events.

- Providing information for and receiving information from supervisors, co-workers, and subordinates by telephone, in written form, e-mail, or in person.
- Analyzing information and evaluating results to choose the best solution and solve problems.
- Developing constructive and cooperative working relationships with others, and maintaining them over time.
- Translating or explaining what information means and how it can be used.
- Compiling, coding, categorizing, calculating, tabulating, or verifying information or data.
- Identifying the underlying principles, reasons, or facts of information by breaking down information or data into separate parts.
- Observing, receiving, and otherwise obtaining information from all relevant sources.
- Keeping up-to-date technically and applying new knowledge to your job.

## **Final Comments**

While most of the above suggestions have been framed in terms of what principals and other administrators can do, teachers' role in developing trust with administrators should not be overlooked. Clearly, teachers' levels of receptivity to and support for principals' efforts to improve trust make a difference in how effective they can be. The responsibility for building trust among teachers falls on the shoulders of principals and teachers alike. Principals can -and should- take an active role in creating the necessary conditions for teacher relationships that are both collegial and congenial.

If relationships between teachers are to change significantly, teachers themselves must work to identify barriers to trust within the staff and take the initiative to improve, repair, and maintain relationships. Trust within a team is grounded in common

understandings about what students should learn, how instruction should be conducted, and how teachers and students should behave with one another. For teachers to sense integrity among colleagues, a faculty must not only share these views but also perceive that the actions taken by other teachers are consistent with them.

Authentic relationships, however, are fostered by personal conversations, frequent dialogue, shared work, and shared responsibilities. As individuals interact with one another, they tend to listen across boundaries—boundaries raised by authority, grade levels, expertise, position, race, and gender. Principals can support collaboration by making time in the schedule for teachers to work together, providing training on effective strategies for team-building and offering incentives for teachers to collaborate. Building new relationships, whatever the circumstances, takes time; rebuilding relationships in which trust has been damaged can take far longer. If we hope to make meaningful, lasting change within school communities, however, identifying increased educator trust as a priority and taking the time to develop it looks to be well worth the investment.



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