

Organisational ways of managing conflict

Dr. Fernando Marhuenda

Departamento de Didáctica y Organización Escolar.

Faculta de Filosofía y Ciencias de la Educación.

Av. Blasco Ibáñez, 30

46010 Valencia

Tf: +34 96 3864427 ext. 51077

Fax: +34 96 3864971

E-mail: Fernando.Marhuenda@uv.es

Almudena Navas

Dpto. Didáctica y Organización Escolar. Facultad de Filosofía y CC de la Educación.

Av. Blasco Ibáñez, 30

46010 Valencia

Tf: +34 96 3864427 ext. 51091

Fax: +34 96 3864971

E-mail: Almudena.Navas@uv.es

Abstract

The research context of this project is a particular training course aimed at young people with no school qualification [for a profession at a level 1]: the Social Guarantee Schemes (SGS) in the Valencian region (Spain).

Young people who participate in these schemes have a common feature: they don't have the compulsory secondary education degree (*Graduado en Educación Secundaria Obligatoria*). They are considered as school-failed people. Other interesting features of these schemes is the fact that several kinds of organisations can develop them (from secondary schools to NGOs, as well as local government agencies).

Within the framework of a larger research focused on the vocational identity configuration at the Social Guarantee Schemes¹, we have focused on how the organisation have an impact upon the socialisation of young people who have failure histories. We collected qualitative data about how each organisation deal with conflictive situations involving students and teachers.

Even if the main aim of these schemes is to provide an opportunity to young people by giving them the basic notions of an specific vocational training, one of the troubles teachers have to face is related to possible disruptive behaviours of these young people and how to face that situation. In a narrative way young participants tell us how they manage a real conflict inside the scheme and they compare those to a real workplace situation.

Key words: conflict, vocational training, and organisations.

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Introduction

Our purpose in this paper is to contribute to better define those youth who, without having achieved the compulsory education degree, enter a vocational training course named 'social guarantee scheme'. We would like to understand how these youth live, understand and solve conflict situations within the organizations in which they are being trained, and how these are linked to the world of work.

It is relatively easy to find academic literature describing training, the world of work and at risk people. We would like to focus on the way that the educational administration defines the needs of these people when ruling the tools and training programmes that will be offered to them, and that give certain autonomy to the social agents and the institutions that decide to run these schemes. By doing so, we will pay attention to the ways in which these institutions try to socialize young people through the ways they address conflict.

We consider conflict situations in the educational institutions as an issue that has an impact upon the educational community, they are privileged scenarios to analyze socialisation styles, given that the particular organization of Social Guarantee Schemes facilitates the involvement of all agents in one or other way.

Along the paper, we will use the results of part of the field research we conducted under a wider framework named 'The formation of vocational identities in Social Guarantee Schemes' (acronym IDELAB). In that wider project, we try to understand the impact of changes in the educational sector upon vocational training. The results presented in this paper are part of the third phase of that research. Previous phases focused upon the historical, geographical and social context of the schemes, as well as upon the vocational identities of trainers.

The overall aim of the third phase of the study is to deepen into the ways in which young people build and develop their vocational identity, through the analysis of their perception about work, given that work is the key element around which competencies are provided in those schemes. The reason why we focus on conflict as part of the research is that we have ground to believe that training in these programmes is embedded in socialisation elements, given the features of the youth to which they are addressed and which are given below.

We start the paper by describing the specific kind of training that social guarantee schemes provide, particularly in the region of Comunidad Valenciana. In this first phase, we point to those elements which will help us understand the context for the results given below in the paper.

We then try to describe the educational practice of these schemes. We will explain which are the institutions that run them, looking at the social agents behind them and how they perceive and address the conflicts that happen along everyday training.

Finally, we hope that this paper will give us an opportunity to exchange opinions about and to outline some conclusions about the educational value of conflict and its socialisation potential in educational institutions working with youth at risk.

Macrocontext: Social Guarantee Schemes in Comunidad Valenciana.

Compulsory schooling ends up at the age of 16 in Spain. It is then that one can formally take decisions related to access to the world of work. Such decisions are conditioned by the global success one had in secondary education: pass or fail.

For those without the pass, one of the training choices are Social Guarantee Schemes. Hernández (1996) divides policies about youth in two dominant models depending upon the approach they have towards young people: those which consider them 'engines of innovation, able to produce changes and push society towards more democratic models', and those who see youth as 'a social risk for society, for which they need to be 'looked after' in order to enter a normalized life'. Social Guarantee Schemes were politically devised as a tool for this second approach, as they perceive the young people they address as population needed of certain tools and skills to compensate their lacks in order to become members of society.

We will not give a detailed picture of the legislation of these schemes, yet we have to show certain elements of the ways in which they are organized and which are the aims they explicitly have, as set by the educational administration: These aims show the inclusion of these programmes among those educational policies focused on compensating needs of the addressees.

Social Guarantee Schemes (SGS) were first established by the former Education Act in 1990 (LOGSE)² and they were first born in 1994 in Valencia and Cataluña, soon followed by all other regions in Spain. This is something relevant, as such schemes lack a state-wide regulation, despite it is a national law the one that gives room to them. For this reason, such schemes entail different features along the country, even pursuing different aims. While in Andalucía, for example, SGS focus in reentering education, other regions like Navarra have a well defined vocational feature.

In Comunidad Valenciana, the region of our study, the legislation was first established in March 22 1994 (DOGV 2269, 18-5-94) and was revised only in February 24 2000 (DOGV 3708, 14-3-00). Such legislation sets the conditions after which SGS are yearly offered.

Microcontext: The features of a SGS.

Despite differences among regions, some similar features may be found in the following domains: overall aims, addressees, programme structure, professionals in charge, links to vocational profiles, different institutions entitled to run them. Differences among regions show that some of these features are highlighted and others are hindered.

With regard to aims of SGS, we can find:

- a) To widen the training of pupils, in order to acquire skills that should have been achieved in basic education, with the aim to allow them to enter into working life either to pursue further vocational training.
- b) To qualify people in order to perform professional work, in jobs and occupations appropriate for their skills and personal expectations.
- c) To develop and reaffirm their personal maturity, through the acquisition of skills and habits that allow them to participate, as responsible workers and citizens, in both work and social and cultural life.

All of the addressees have in common their fail in achieving the compulsory education degree. Schemes are offered for young people under 25 and over 16 and who lack any other vocational qualification.

The structure of the schemes consists of 900 hours along the academic course, that can be extended to a second course in certain cases. The maximum ration in the schemes is of 15 students, with a minimum of 10 per group.

Those 900 hours are structured as follows: 540 hours for vocational training (VT); 216 for basic education (BE); 108 hours for tutorials and career guidance and 36 hours for other activities of complementary nature. Furthermore, and according to the students, work experience in a company is allowed for a limited period if teachers consider it appropriate.

The teaching team is formed by two educators: an expert in the occupation for which the training is offered and a university degree with teaching experience in youth at risk in charge of teaching basic education.

Finally, institutions that are entitled to run the programmes are also diverse: both public and private schools, as well as non-profit organizations or municipalities.

The context of research: The Schemes and their addressees.

² Cabe señalar que estamos viviendo un período de transición hacia una nueva Ley de educación (LOCE 2002) en la que los Programas de Garantía Social dejan de ser considerados como tales y se modifica su actual organización, si bien aún está por definir cómo serán sustituidos.

There are certain aspects that contribute to think of SGS as part of the formal education system, while others tend to make of them rather vocational training (Aparisi, 1998; Marhuenda, 1998). The former are the following:

- The legal framework of reference: LOGSE.
- Certain compensatory role, translated into basic education as part of its *curriculum*.
- Recruitment of young people basically in schools.

Among the latter, we can find the following:

- A professional emphasis that focuses in entering the world of work rather than in returning back to the educational system, hence helping the youth to abandon the system with a minimum set of skills (Báscones, 1995).
- The absence of most of the regulatory mechanisms of formal education: SGS lack legal decrees that set their minimum contents, they lack a well defined curriculum, they lack an evaluation system; there are more than one type of institution providing them, they are in a way de-institutionalized and this is explicitly acknowledged; they are jointly ruled by the administrations of education and work; they are run under funding mechanisms that are subject to change yearly; they lack most of the requirements set for teachers in all other levels of the system (Marhuenda, 1998).

We can therefore see that SGS are an educational tool ambiguously defined, given the lack of definition of the legislation which opens room for many different concretions under the same heading.

We decided to take as relevant elements for our research both the kind of institution as well as the psycho-social features of the students, in order to reduce the variety of situations. From our point of view, the institution plays a key role in SGS. Given the changes in the market, our hypothesis is that the flexibility of this tool is used by the institutions in a way that shapes the perceptions of the pupils with regard to work, by recreating educational situations oriented to the occupation that profiles the programme. This is possible given that it is the institution the one which selects both trainers and young people; this is so for all cases except secondary schools, which cannot select trainers.

Research methodology.

We consider relevant for our research the following psycho-social features of the young people in SGS (Auberni 1995):

- They show *lack of hope and disillusion towards the educational system* as a result of their persistent feeling of personal failure within the system.
- They have a *culture of 'passing by'* reflected in attitudes of dependency and conformism with respect to themselves as well as the reality surrounding them.
- They *value work in an instrumental not intrinsic way*, therefore far from conceiving work as a means to express one's personal potential.
- They have a *limited personal perspective, established with no alternative in the immediate present*, hence making difficult any planning for a personal life project.
- They show a *high ignorance about how the world of work is structured, what are their requirements and priorities*, what are the available means in order to achieve the aims and the organizational and institutional elements embedded in it.
- Closely related to the above, they also seem to have *scarce information about their own training chances and about their chances in accessing the labour market*.
- They show also a *lack of personal skills for decision taking and for insertion into work* which will be translated into greater difficulties to start and maintain satisfactory personal relations.

The other element we want to consider are the institutions. We selected institutions that had been taking part in SGS for a while, and therefore we approached seven institutions: 2 secondary public schools, 1 private secondary school, 2 non-profit organizations and 2 municipalities.

To consider the combination of institutions as highly flexible spaces where the aims of SGS could be interpreted and accomplished, together with the features of the addressees, we approached the gathering of data as follows: we interviewed the young people in all those institutions in groups of three. We asked the trainers to arrange these groups, looking for certain equilibrium according to affinity among the youth. We wanted to have the interview situation as much as possible under control, as we were outsiders asking them information about relevant conflicts that had happened in the school, be they involved in them or not.

Prior to such interviews, we had asked the trainers to explain us the recent conflicts that had taken place in the programme, be teachers involved in them or not. Such an information allowed us to inquiry into situations that students might not mention.

We interviewed 107 students and we asked them to list the most recent and relevant conflicts in the scheme, to mention three of them in order to explain one of them in detail. We tried that all groups in the same scheme explained the same conflict. We used the following questions:

- What happened?
- How or who started it?
- How was it solved?
- How long did it take to solve it?
- Who contributed to solve it?
- Was that solution the only way out of the conflict?
- If it happened again, what would you do?

Finally, we asked the students whether they could imagine the same conflict situation in different contexts to the original in which it had taken place, ie.: (i) BE class (ii) VT class; (iii) a company; and (iv) corridors or common spaces adscribed to the institution but not subject to the physical presence of trainers.

Defining and typifying conflict

García and Martínez (2001, p. 15) define conflict as 'a situation of confrontation provoked by contraposed interests in relation to the same issue or the belief that the aims of the different parts (where the conflict is interpersonal) may not be achieved simultaneously'.

From this perspective, conflict in classrooms, indiscipline, is closely related to other issues like low school achievement or teachers unsatisfaction. With that definition, linking this concept to others such as 'violence', 'problematic students', 'school climate' and 'students competencies', the above mentioned authors develop several categorizations of conflicts that happen in schools.

According to Esperanza, in relation to research conducted by INCE, 'the most frequent problems are, in this order: confusion out of the classroom, lack of respect for colleagues, confusion in the classroom, moral aggression, lack of respect to teachers, not attending school' (Esperanza, 2002, pp. 1-2).

Martin *et al.* (2001), on their side, suggest the following typology which establishes different types of conflict in a more detailed way:

- a. Social exclusion (ignoring, excluding)
- b. Verbal aggression (insulting, giving nicknames, spreading rumours)
- c. Indirect physical aggression (hiding things, breaking things, stealing things)
- d. Direct physical aggression (hitting)
- e. Threat and blackmailing (in order to frighten someone, to force someone to do something, even with arms)
- f. Sexual harassment

These authors also establish differences in the way in which one may become involved in a mistreating situation: as a witness, as the victim, as the aggressor. In their study for the Children Ombudsman in the Community of Madrid, they provide statistics relative to the happening of such forms of mistreating depending on the direction in which this happens (students to teachers or the other way round).

They also take into account the frequency of reactions of teachers in their classes before bullying behaviors: ignoring what has happened, sending off students, talking with them in the office, writing a report, sending the student to the pastoral department, asking the headteacher to intervene, asking the school board to open a file for the students, bringing the student before the law, not replying at all.

Finally, we have also looked to the contribution of the Teachers Union in CCOO (2001):

1. Antisocial behavior of students.
 - a. Disruption in the classroom.
 - b. Confusion (insulting, lacking respect to people, timetables, ...)
 - c. Psychological violence
 - d. Vandalism
 - e. Physical violence (agressions, extortion)
 - f. Sexual harrassment
 - g. Skipping classes and abandoning school
 - h. Fraud and corruption
2. Security problems in the school.
 - a. Crime comitted in school
 - b. Crime comitted by people not members of the school
 - c. Insecurity climate, individual or collective consciousness
3. Violence of school against students.
 - a. Teachers mistreating students
 - b. Intrinsic injustice of the system and the institution (marginalizing, stigmatizing, condemning to failure, symbolic violence)
4. Conflict between adults.
 - a. Between families and teachers
 - b. Among teachers themselves
 - c. Among families themselves
 - d. Between teachers and/or families and non-teaching staff

We will make use of this typology in order to contrast our results against it, pointing to the type of conflicts that we have discovered. In the table below, we show our data including as well the solution provided by each of the institution:

	Solutions in schools				
Conflicts in the classroom	Private dialogue (teacher and student)	Open discussion of the conflict in public	Imposing academic tasks	Temporal or permanent sending-off students	Involving third parties (headteacher, the institution, parents)
a. Confusion in the classroom	1	1,3,4	5		4

b. Lack of respect and insulting	1,6	1,6		6	6
c. Physical aggression	6			6	6
d. Mistreating teachers and students				2	7
e. Spoiling things	5	4,5	5	7	4,5
f. Excluding, rejecting others	6				2,3,6

Table 1: Correspondence between conflict and solutions adopted.

(Legend: 1: NPO; 2: SS; 3: SS; 4: PSS; 5: M; 6: M; 7: NPO)

(NPO=non profit organization; SS=secondary school; PSS=private secondary school; M=municipality)

Why is conflict so rare? If we think of the students of SGS, which has often been disposed off by secondary schools for academic or behaviour reasons, we might expect a higher occurrence of conflict in the SGS. This does not happen, yet.

What we have found is that the peculiar organization of SGS contributes for an immediate solution before conflict. All of the conflicts listed in the table above except a) are behaviours before which a certain pattern is followed: dialogue in private/public happens first, then a third party is involved if needed and finally a sanction is imposed (either sending off the student or having extra academic work).

The speed of the solution and the close relations between teachers and students make us consider the organization of SGS as the key in order to address conflict for at-risk youth. No matter what the institution is like, most solutions are similar, as well as the conflicts that arise in them. In a SGS, both space and authority are limited, for which dialogue is often used as the means to solve conflict immediately.

We are now going to show in greater detail some examples, trying to understand both the perception of teachers and youth of these conflicts as well as looking at the solutions given to them, their effectiveness as well as how they are assessed, particularly by young people.

Conflict in educational practice and its solution within the institutions

The question we were trying to answer here is how teachers perform their teaching practice taking into account a) the low ratio of students and b) the curricular weight of the vocational dimension of the SGS.

Given that students coming to the same programme only have in common the fact that they lack the secondary education degree and that they are below 25 and that, on the other side, they employ most of their time learning an occupation in the institution, we have observed that different individualized practice is possible.

The understanding of the teaching practice itself by both the trainer and the teacher in the SGS, as well as its performance, was interesting to observe insofar different students develop different tasks at the same time and in the same space, so that 'people need to assume an internalized order in order to facilitate self-control in each one' (Gimeno, 2003, p. 180). Each institution has a set of implicit and explicit norms, rules, invisible codes of behavior and sanctioning regimes that shape the relations among teachers and students, students themselves and teachers between them. Furthermore, there are both vertical and horizontal hierarchical divisions.

This is the reason why we consider the ways of managing conflict of each institution would give us traces about how relations among individuals are shaped and regulated. We wanted to see in which way certain students without the degree entered a SGS in a particular organization in which they would learn ways of relating and positioning themselves in a social and labour context.

How students perceive conflict

When we asked students to tell us about conflicts that had happened, they replied in 6 out of the 7 institutions that there was no conflict, rather on the contrary.

As we had previously held an interview with teachers, we had some information about conflict and we could therefore enquire further about this. Young people tended to compare the

situation of the SGS with the secondary school in their past, clearly saying that the current situation was far more positive for them:

A1: We talk during the break with those in other classes in the school, and they have fights far stronger than we.

A2: We don't have conflicts. We enjoy showing off, we have all done that, but always among friends and always joking... This is cool because we are friends: we all enjoy discos.

This 6 institutions are of the 4 different types of SGS we have identified. The reasons why students consider there is no conflict there, despite conflictive situations have happened sporadically, are a) the teaching personal style and b) the issue that is consider a conflict itself.

In relation to the teaching style, in all 6 institutions they define their teachers as: tolerant, patient, cool, kind, calm people. All of these features are mentioned when the students talk about the teachers' reaction to possible conflictive situations:

A3: Teachers are very cool. No conflict, rather joking, we always joke. The trainer is very tolerant.

In relation to the issue of the conflict, students don't consider it important for they are no relevant, not so much to consider it conflict:

A4: Everything that has happened in BE is nonsense

A5: There are no relevant conflict: they sanction us as usual and that's it...

A6: Academic raws: 'I haven't scored as high as he has'... we cannot move to another place... We complain and that's it.

The relevance of conflict is often determined, in all institutions, by a lack of adaptation of one of the parts involved (teacher or student) to what is expected ad the normal activity in the school:

A7: They are unconsciouss people [talking about students that provoke conflict]

A8: We have conflict everyday, but it is always with the same person. [A special needs student attending a non special needs SGS]

A9: There is conflict with those who self-exclude themselves from the beggining, not because we have marginalised them, but it has been them who have kept on the margins.

Students perceive that the time they devote to each task is important to learn the occupation. Those who remain in the SGS have internalized the basic official aim of it, in such a way that they consider teachers and trainers as people working to 'save' them in comparison with the views they had of them in their past school experience:

A10: Teachers are eager to teach us and that we learn the trade

A11: It feels much better here than in school, at least here they care for you

We have to take into account that these students have undergone a double selection: a) entering the programme, via the mechanisms that the institution has established and b) having been interviewed three months after having started the SGS: this implies that the institution has been able to get rid of those students not consider 'able' to integrate successfully in the programme (be it by voluntary absence of the student or by his dismissal). This double filter may be the reason for such a nice atmosphere, so that students consider that 'there is no conflict with teachers' or 'there are no big conflicts'.

A: Classes are not so problematic now because they have already dismissed the conflictive students.

Nevertheless, this is the first approach of students to conflict in their institutions. Once they have made this clear and they have mentioned the conflicts that might have happened,

their assessment of the situation varies and we can identify tacit mechanisms of regulation in the institution as well as resistance to them by students.

Mechanisms of regulation and individual resistance

When students assess what has happened their opinions are in accordance with the solutions adopted to solve the conflicts. Sometimes, their assessment is related to the way in which they feel they (and their colleagues) have to behave in the scheme. It is astonishing how fast (just three months) students have assumed the way of behaving in the institution.

With regard to the appropriate way to solve a conflict in their institutions, two of them outstand: a) dialogue and b) temporal or permanent dismissal. Students report that in any conflict situation they have to talk to those who have been part of the conflict, then involving a higher instance if necessary, in order to facilitate things, particularly when there is no agreement or there is reincidence.

A: We use dialogue to avoid conflict

A: If we don't come to a solution, we then call the teachers

A: I have talked to him and asked him to stop it.

When pupils talk like this, they usually follow up reporting what is their own role in the SGS:

A: He has come here to learn, otherwise he may leave now.

A: He does not learn and he doesn't let us either. We waste our time, time to learn mechanics.

A: He shows off but we stop him. He is like that. Instead of paying attention to teachers or focusing in what he has to.

A: He doesn't do anything; they might well send him off and get someone else to benefit from this.

They also suggest some solutions for such situations:

A: Teachers should make this clear to them and act now.

A: They should talk to him, sending his parents a note or talking to them so that they know how their son behaves

A: He comes here to pay attention, otherwise he should leave

A: It seems as if the teachers wouldn't want to face that the guy has a problem: they relate to him different than to the rest, which is unfair... He should go to a special institution.

They even put emphasis such as the following:

A: It is bad for the institution that this happens: for the institution, for teachers...

A: If this were a company he'd been fired already

All of these are examples of how the students think their behaviour should be in the scheme and what the teachers reaction should be as well in those conflicts mentioned. In order to learn, certain peaceful atmosphere is needed within the team in order to let everyone perform their tasks. They perceive the SGS as an appropriate place to learn, and they value it positively. This is the reason why they are uneasy with colleagues that do not appreciate the chance the programme gives them. They are very clear about the bad impact conflict has upon their learning time and that there are other programmes and institutions more appropriate for those conflictive individuals.

All of this referent to 'what the programme should be' for students point to the fact that they have learned that invisible code that regulates the relations between individuals and within the institution. The behaviors of these SGS students that don't enter the dynamic

proposed by the institution should be punished, so they hold their own colleagues. And punishment is in benefit of the common good, which consists of accomplish the aims of the programme.

This common good is not always in accordance with decisions adopted by the teaching team, which sometimes causes resistance to such way of management. We found particularly strong resistance in two of the institutions: in one case, a public secondary school, a student tried to sign up for a colleague in the attendance record and the teacher reacted slapping him; the student then started a fight and he was temporarily dismissed. In another occasion, in a municipality, the whole group was against a student who 'even came with her mother, spoiled every arrangement and we all wasted our time. Since she was dismissed, there has been no problem here'. This student was dismissed permanently after several conflicts with colleagues and teachers.

In any case, students say things like the following:

Institution 1: "The trainer usually slaps you if you make a mistake. That isn't fine, yet slapping is not a punishment. The trainer is rather old and his ways are those of the past... It is not that it hurts, but ... 'I will respect the elder', but you have also to respect me. Working is far more demanding, yet they don't slap you at work"

Institution 2: "The other one stayed because she had to stay, otherwise we would have all left with her. Everyone has been against her for a while now. The psychologist and the trainer were the only ones who could handle her, she was rather special"

In the first case, most of the students come from the same institution, they have stayed in the same school. Therefore they are already used to norms and rules and punishments, and they cope with them. Nevertheless, they disagree with the behavior of this trainer and they think he lacks respect for them. Yet, despite the tacit resistance before him, they absolve him for considering him as a teacher, first, and as an old one, from the past, in second place.

In the other case, the student that stayed in the programme, who was supported by her colleagues, declared to have reached her limit in the last discussion they had: she did not want to be dismissed of the scheme, that would have been a shame for her.

In general terms, students consider that it is mainly one or two people that cause the conflict and that teachers are more flexible with them:

A: If you do something to one of these two, then the trainers know and you are in trouble.

It is surprising that this group, SGS students, with a record of school failure, internalize and accept the rules and working habits, hence becoming themselves the first ones to keep the order and to disagree with the disruptive behavior or certain colleagues.

The role of teachers

When asking the students what might have happened if the conflict would have happened before the trainer or the teacher, we intended to find out how students perceive the authority roles they portray.

We found out that there are two forms of setting up the authority in the scheme. One of them in those institutions in which the situation is not relevant for happening in a certain context, for being independent of the context. In the other one, on the contrary, it is context-dependent: students change their behaviour depending to the adult before them, in a way that certain situations may not even happen in certain places linked to certain authority figures.

The independence of the context may be based upon a) the institution has made explicit this way of behaving so that the norm is harder to transgress, both for teachers and students. And b) there exists an authority figure acknowledged by all, usually the teacher in charge of the coordination of the programme and of one of the two main modules.

In context-dependent conflicts, students come to know the limits of teachers after a period of trial and negotiation. They openly declare they awayt the moment to go beyond the

limits set by the visible norms. In all these institutions, students remark that, before a conflict situation, teachers go in search of help from someone with authority, be it the headteacher or the coordinator.

In the view of students, this is related to the image that teachers have built about students:

A: As clear as this: they relate to us as if we were silly. We could do good things, but not. It seems that they believed the first day that we were to be dumm, and dumm we have remained. A fixed idea, SGS is for silly people.

A: The teacher wanted to dismiss him: 'you are abnormal, that is what you are, you drive me crazy ...', because he does something everyday. [Speaking about how the teacher behaved after the headteacher came to see what happened in the classroom.]

The following excerpts are representative of the difference between teachers in the same programme, when we are in a context-dependent institution:

Teacher 1: There is indeed conflict with A (the teacher); almost everyday, for we don't keep quiet. One day we spoke a lot, she started crying and she left: that is the worst that has happened. She solved it by speaking to the headteacher. If something happens with her, she tells the coordinator and the next day he tells us. If we have some problem among us, she tells us to solve it ourselves. She is not going to discuss it, she will not waste her time for this nonsense.

Teacher 2: In the workshop there is no conflict: the trainer imposes a lot. When he speaks, everyone shuts down. When he is off, the replacement is not able to, it is the trainer who rules. The replacement has to lay upon other teachers. The trainer is the one who decides whether we will pass or not. If there is some problem, then the trainer speaks with the person and the problem does not happen any more.

Students acknowledge the authority of those teachers that care to talk to them, even if this is to punish them for bad behavior. When teachers search for someone else to help, then the students miss the respect they might have for their authority. This happens in all institutions in which it is the trainers that are to be respected, often above the teacher. When teachers go in search of external help, then such situations become routines, breaking down the preferred chain of dialogue that is used if they themselves face the problems.

We find an example of this in a municipality in which students talk like this about the trainer:

A: People respect him a lot. We cannot play with him, because there [in the workshop] we are supervised by A [the teacher] one by one. That is why people fight at physical education. This would never happen with him [talking about the conflict they are describing]. The two of them would have been dismissed, as they have been already given notice. Not with him, people respect him.

Always when students use the word 'respect' to talk about their relation to the teacher, this does not need to go in search of someone else for help to solve problems out.

Notes for the state of the art of conflict in institutions working with young people with no degree.

Understanding conflict situations help us understand the ways in which students are being educated within an institution, for this shows up the type of relations that individuals have among them.

Conflict in SGS, for their peculiar aims, seem to be dependent upon the views and prejudices on students that teachers have, as well as about their limits and possibilities.

In this sense, there are institutions that hold as appropriate to turn conflict into part of the teaching relation and they make visible the ways of positioning before them. On the contrary, there are institutions in which there is no room for conflict, hence it remains hidden.

We have found also in more than half of our cases that the roles are divided, and either the teacher or the trainer are the 'good' and the 'bad' in solving conflicts.

Taking into account conflict as part of the education of students seems the appropriate form to work with young people stigmatized by their 'school failure'. By making visible an issue which often remains tacit, the level of 'knowing how to be' is overcome by the level of 'knowing how to do'. Vocational programmes like these, even despite its low level of qualification, show a tendency to teach students to behave in a tacit way, without emphasizing the vocational dimension. The aims of the programmes, explicitly to facilitate their entry into the labour market by learning a trade, are translated in many institutions into the teaching of how to relate to the other rather than how to perform a task.

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