

## RESEARCH

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### **DRAMATIZATION AND SOCIAL ABILITIES EN PRIMARY EDUCATION. CASE STUDY: A STUDENT, SUFFERING BULLYING, WITH ASSERTIVE DIFFICULTIES**

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#### **ABSTRACT:**

Programs, which are often full of repetitive aims and contents, frequently separate infants and youths from the joy of experimentation, from the pleasure of creation, from communicating with others, from the knowledge of the values of their classmates surrounding them. We must recognize that our modern society needs to humanize, to receive positive personal emotions. In exchange, we find more and more introverted boys and girls, with relationship and communicative problems. Teachers must unify, rectify and modify so that our pupils know how to include a bit of creativity and individual knowledge in their lives. Theatrical games can be a marvelous resource for working on individual and social relations and specially help those students who need to develop these types of abilities. Here we show a case study in which a student with difficulties in social abilities, and which led him to have a terrible relationship with his equals, receives therapy through a school theatre group in a normalized and inclusive manner. Managing great achievements in his personal, affective and social development. Cañas invites us to accomplish the mission of encouraging teachers to step forward towards painting with color and love each and every center, each and every class, each and every soul of our boys and girls.

**KEY WORDS:** Social abilities - assertiveness - dramatization - primary - case study

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## **DRAMATIZACIÓN Y HABILIDADES SOCIALES EN EDUCACIÓN PRIMARIA. ESTUDIO DE CASO: UN ALUMNO, OBJETO DE BULLYING, CON DIFICULTADES EN ASERTIVIDAD**

### **RESUMEN:**

Los programas, tan llenos a veces de objetivos y contenidos de carácter repetitivo, apartan muy a menudo a la infancia y a la juventud del gozo de la experimentación, del placer de la creación, de la comunicación con los demás, del conocimiento de los valores de los compañeros que les rodean. Es necesario reconocer que nuestra sociedad actual necesita humanizarse, recibir emociones personales positivas. En cambio, cada vez tenemos más chicos y chicas introvertidos, con problemas de relación y comunicación. Los profesores y profesoras debemos aunar, rectificar, y modificar para que nuestros alumnos sepan incluir en su vida un poquito de creatividad y conocimiento personal. El juego teatral puede ser un maravilloso recurso para trabajar las relaciones personales y sociales y ayudar especialmente a los alumnos/as que necesitan desarrollar ese tipo de habilidades. Aquí mostramos un estudio de caso donde un alumno con dificultades en habilidades sociales, y que le había llevado a una terrible relación con sus iguales, recibe terapia a través de un grupo de teatro escolar de forma normalizada e inclusiva. Consiguiendo grandes logros en su desarrollo personal, afectivo y social. José Cañas nos invita a llevar a cabo la misión de animar al profesorado para que den el paso de pintar de color y calor cada uno de los centros, cada una de las aulas, cada una de las almas de nuestros chicos y chicas.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Habilidades sociales – asertividad – dramatización – primaria - estudio de caso

## **DRAMATIZAÇÃO E HABILIDADES SOCIAIS EM EDUCAÇÃO PRIMÁRIA. ESTUDO DO CASO: UM ALUNO, OBJETO DE BULLYING, COM DIFICULDADES EM ASSERTIVIDADE**

### **RESUMO**

Os programas, às vezes tão cheios de objetivos e conteúdos de carácter repetitivos, distanciam muitas vezes a infância e a juventude do gozo da experimentação, do prazer e da criação, da comunicação com os demais, do conhecimento de valores de seus companheiros que estão ao seu redor. É necessário reconhecer que nossa sociedade atual necessita humanizar-se, receber emoções pessoais positivas. Ao contrário, cada vez temos mais meninos e meninas introvertidos, com problemas de relação e comunicação. Nós professores devemos unir, retificar, e modificar para que nossos alunos saibam incluir em suas vidas um pouquinho de criatividade e conhecimento pessoal. O jogo teatral pode ser um maravilhoso recurso para trabalhar as relações pessoais e sociais e ajudar especialmente aos alunos que necessitam desenvolver esse tipo de habilidade. Aqui mostramos um estudo do caso

onde o aluno com dificuldades em habilidades sociais, e que havia levado uma terrível relação com seus companheiros, recebe terapia através de um grupo de teatro escolar de forma normalizada e inclusiva. Conseguindo grandes resultados em seu desenvolvimento pessoal, afetivo e social. José Cañas nos convida a levar a cabo a missão de estimular ao professorado a tomar a iniciativa de apoiar a cada um dos centros, a cada aula, a cada alma de nossas meninas e meninos.

**PALAVRAS CHAVE:** Habilidades sociais – Assertividade – Dramatização – Primária – Estudo do caso

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Dramatization is, above all, a group and collective practice that brings together a group of individuals to improvise a theme (a narration, a story, a poem), chosen by the different members, guided by the figure of a coordinator. Even the monologues represent a dialogue of a person with himself or with the spectators ...

The group sphere is the basic nucleus of personality structure, determined by emotions and the quality of interpersonal relationships. Introducing dramatization in the educational field allows us to address both affective and social development, obtaining very positive results in the motivation of the participants, enhancing their self-esteem and creativity. (Sánchez, D., 2007)<sup>2</sup>.

This way, the linguistic and communicative capacity is enriched, resolving conflicts inherent in the group process. Likewise, communication and social interaction play an essential role in the creative impulse of the individual and in his emotional competence.

It enables the individual to give way to his inner world and recreate new affections through the different characters and the significant relationship with others. Cooperating in a common adventure is important and necessary within a community that works in collaboration and expresses itself unanimously.

To Pavis (1983)<sup>3</sup>, dramatic play is a collective practice that brings together a group of individuals who improvise together according to a theme previously chosen by them, providing improvisation with a dramatic structure. The role of the teacher-animator will be to identify problems that arise, for example, by taking appropriate actions to integrate marginalized members of the group, or those who do not identify with the activity.

We cannot consider that Primary Education is exclusively a learning process of knowledge, but it must also encompass character education. The process of

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<sup>2</sup> According to the research that appears in the thesis "The dramatization in E. Primaria as axis of the learning-playful creative". M<sup>a</sup> D. Sánchez Gala, 2007

<sup>3</sup> Pavis. (1983). La dramatización como recurso digital en "*Revista Arista Digital*". Available in: [http://www.afapna.es/web/aristadigital/archivos\\_revista/2010\\_diciembre\\_46.pdf](http://www.afapna.es/web/aristadigital/archivos_revista/2010_diciembre_46.pdf)

formation at this stage requires experiential learning of one's emotional reality. This is achieved naturally by the child through games that have a strong dramatic component.

A. Pelegrín (1990)<sup>4</sup> assures that, in these collective creations, the child generates a natural flow to the outside using his experiences while opening a channel to an inner flow through which he can absorb and assimilate things for use in new creations. The dramatic expression reaches an exponential value for integral learning for the child who needs to rehearse everything he learns.

There are many pieces of research that have dealt with the subject of assertiveness (631 documents in dialnet) but much less those working on school assertiveness (37 documents in dialnet). 393 works are referred to dramatization but only 29 are those that refer to school dramatization. But if we join both terms, dramatization and assertiveness, within the school, we find out there is absence of articles published in this field.

Regarding the instrument of measurement, we have started from the piece of research carried out by Dr. Sánchez Gala in her thesis "*Dramatization in Primary E. as the axis of playful-creative learning*". In this study, the author argues that research on assertiveness in children is a very recent issue. There are very few instruments for the measurement of this variable in Primary E. subjects. The earliest tests of child self-report on assertive behavior were modified versions of adult inventories, such as Rathus's *Rathus Assertiviness Scale*, adapted by adapting language to high school students by Vaal and McCullog and for elementary school children by D'Amico, without studying their psychometric characteristics of reliability and validity of the new test for students.

There are other studies of interest even if they were not confirmed at the level of external validity. Thus, Reardon, Hersen, Bellack and Foley created SRAT-B to evaluate the answers that could be used in real life; Deluty created the CATS scale on the characteristics of children on aggressiveness, assertiveness and submission, the objective of which was to evaluate interpersonal conflicts in specific situations.

Wood, Michelson, and Flynn created the Assertive Behavior Scale for Children (CABS), which aimed to classify aggressive, inhibited, and assertive children. To do this, they have proposed a series of situations on topics such as making and receiving compliments, presenting and accepting criticism, asking and giving things, accepting guilt, giving help, initiating conversations and behavior before orders. The scale consists of 27 items, each with five answer alternatives: aggressive, assertive, highly inhibited, inhibited and assertive, showing acceptable levels of consistency (De la Peña, 2008).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Pelegrín, A. M<sup>a</sup>. (1990). "*Cada cual atiende su juego*". Madrid, Cincel, p.18.

<sup>5</sup> De la Peña (2008): Comportamiento asertivo y adaptación social: adaptación de una escala de comportamiento asertivo (CABS) para escolares de enseñanza primaria (6-12 años). Available in: [http://www.deciencias.net/convivir/1.documentacion/D.habilidades/Escala\\_comp\\_asertivo\(CABS\).pdf](http://www.deciencias.net/convivir/1.documentacion/D.habilidades/Escala_comp_asertivo(CABS).pdf)

Dramatic play is therefore educational and should be included in the overall pedagogical project to stimulate and motivate both the areas of expression and those of experience, with the purpose of contributing to the integral development of the child / through their intellectual and affective load, as it offers the opportunity to externalize and integrate an accumulation of motor skills, affective and interpersonal and social relationship that enhances their self-esteem, another fundamental factor that must be worked within emotional competence.

The child demands at school the presence of a teacher capable of taking into account his / her natural condition as a person living with and for his / her body, and who feels, acts, interprets and expresses his / her originality in action, whose ultimate goal is personal and social self-realization of their students.

## **2. INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS IN DRAMATIZATION.**

This activity is offered as a liberating, integrative and formative alternative as opposed to the traditional school, which bases its teaching on verbal or written communication. Notwithstanding the concern for the acquisition of knowledge, dramatization gives importance to emotional and expressive aspects.

### **2.1. Cooperative work in dramatization. Its importance in education.**

One of the most interesting contributions of the studies developed by Kurt Lewin for education is the conceptualization of three types of student interaction in school groups and three styles of leadership.

Lewin's work was continued by his disciples Kelley, Deutsch, etc, as well as by Cartwright and his collaborators. According to this author, there are three basic ways for students to interact in the school group:

- 1) They can compete with each other to see who is the best.
- 2) They can work individually to achieve a goal without paying attention to the other students.
- 3) They can work cooperatively, each being interested in the work of others as well as in their own.

These three forms of interaction depend on the goals according to which the groups have been structured and give rise to different social situations (Yuni, 2006):

A) *Cooperative*: in which the goals of the separated individuals are so united that there is a positive correlation between the consequences or achievements of their objectives. An individual achieves his goal if, and only if, the other participants achieve theirs.

B) *Competitive*: in which the goals of the participants separately are related to each other in such a way that there is a negative correlation between the consequences of their objectives.

C) *Individualistic*: in which there is no correlation in the achievement of the objectives of the participants.

In general, the dynamics and group techniques characteristic of dramatization facilitate cooperative interaction and communication. This approach to group relations has many positive effects on education both in the field of motivation and in that of learning and in the field of attention to special educational needs that surpasses the other two modes of interacting, competitive and individualistic.

## **2.2. Communication in dramatization activities.**

Almost every time we talk about personal communication we think of verbal or non-verbal language, when in reality we should think more about the people who communicate. In the dynamics of groups as a place of communication, both the quality of the message and the importance of people in their process of interrelationship are of interest, without forgetting the code and the laws of communication.

In the heterogeneous group, the following communication levels occur (Fernández, 2000):

A) *Gestural level*. We greet each other, we communicate in passing by. It is almost always stereotyped, protocol communication.

B) *Circumstantial level*. We say, we communicate what is external, typical of a station where we all go in passing by; Where are you now, what are you doing, where are you going ...

C) *Personal level*. It has the seal of its own. We give the general curriculum or the close one, the one that interests something to the other, the one that places us before the other: work, family, free time ...

D) *Intimate level*. What is only told to an intimate friend, feelings, emotions in moments and situations of intimacy. Giving this information is to give oneself.

E) *Group feed-back level*. We say to the other, to the others, how we see them, how we perceive them, what image of them comes to us, what judgment causes us, what we feel.

The teacher's knowledge of social reality, social relationships and groups of friends, friendship, rejection and its implications for educational practice is essential to make the right decisions when grouping and energizing a group.

On the other hand, children who have a series of deficiencies, such as a disorder of language, attention or personality, lack communicative resources when integrated into an established group. This lack of resources makes them flee from social communication or that it is altered and occurs inappropriately, even with the support of the family and the teacher.

Therefore, Tejerina (1994) considers that the game, in particular dramatization, has an educational role that the school must rescue to enhance imagination, creativity, spontaneity and motivation in learning. Especially in those children where the adult stimulus is deficient in their homes or need special attention in some of their personal dimensions.

During dramatization and creative games, fiction and reality unite to open the doors of imagination, illusion, invention and the pleasure involved in participating and communicating with others, ie strengthening their self-esteem, self-knowledge of their own I, the relationship with others, the encounter of new forms of communication, empathy and social assertiveness. All being elements of Emotional Intelligence.

### **3.- CASE STUDY: S. A STUDENT WITH LACK OF SOCIAL ASSERTIVENESS**

Numerous retrospective studies give a good account of the direct relationship between social skills in childhood and subsequent social, academic and psychological functioning. (Banús, S. 2012)<sup>6</sup>

Developing in today's society, perhaps as never before, despite technological advances, requires the early development of a series of skills of communication, interaction and reading of different social keys to be able to survive emotionally and at work in adulthood.

Many of our children, for different reasons, may not have the minimum resources to develop properly in this regard. The consequences can be social isolation, rejection, sometimes aggressiveness, and, ultimately, a less happy and limited development in their possibilities of growth.

This is what happens to S., a 5<sup>th</sup>-grade Primary Education student who has been referred by the tutor to the Orientation Department to be diagnosed and evaluated for lack of self-esteem, social skills and, especially, lack of assertiveness. This lack of social skills is especially painful because of his age, the relationship with his peers, by the relationship with his teachers and more when the transition to adult life can lead to new demands and communicative challenges. The deficits in social skills have caused in the student low self-esteem, social isolation and lack of defense of his

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<sup>6</sup> Banús, S. (2012): "*Habilidades sociales en la Infancia*". Available in: <http://www.psicodiagnos.es/areageneral/habilidadessocialesinfancia/index.php>

rights and opinions, making S. an extremely shy, withdrawn and apparently sad child.

Within the deficiencies of S. in social skills, we have focused on Assertiveness. Since we consider that this competence is indispensable to achieve the conceptual, procedural and, above all, attitudinal goals for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade of Primary E; the so complicated age of the student predominating and acting from early care and prevention of possible social and communicative problems.

Assertiveness consists of the capacity of knowing how to defend the choice of denying a proposal by the other. Sometimes we do what we are asked, not because we like the idea or because we choose to do it for some reason but because the choice of saying "no" becomes so difficult that we prefer to do it to avoid problems.

Since childhood, we begin to form a concept of ourselves, according to how our parents, classmates, friends, etc see us, taking into account each of the experiences we gradually acquire. Assertiveness plays the role of method and guidance to open our way to excellence in our relations with the others, at the school level through their practice it generates opportunities and reduces the breach among people, it increases the good perception others have of ourselves and is part of the strategies to move forward to the proposed goals and objectives.

According to Novel<sup>7</sup>, and coauthors, Assertiveness can be understood as a model of interpersonal relation allowing us to establish gratifying and satisfactory relations with ourselves and with the others. They conceive assertive interaction as a series of relational skills that favor and potentiate intra- and interpersonal relations, they also differentiate it from social ability, "*speaking of social ability means a much wider construct than it, and it includes elements not only of interpersonal contact but also of all those interactions that people need to do to get along autonomously and independently within their own environment, such as self-care skills, skills for moving, skills for being adequate to the social standards of functioning.*"

Assertiveness considered to be a skill can be learned and potentiated through adequate training, since it is not a stable feature of people but it is one of the possible styles of relation that people can use in their interactions with the others.

### **3.1 Evaluating Assertiveness**

We have based the evaluation of social skills on different types of records and observations. At a first moment, the interview with the parents provided us with a first relevant information about the characteristics of the child and his evolutionary story and current circumstances.

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<sup>7</sup> Available in: <http://www.monografias.com/trabajos91/la-asertividad/la-asertividad.shtml#ixzz2ahk6HfdT>



Also important is the interview with the tutor of the child, who contributed data on his functioning with his classmates. Another procedure we used is that of asking his classmates, according to the following chart: (Banus, S.)<sup>8</sup>

Procedure:	Description of the art:
Nomination by classmates	It is about asking the child about his peers within the group. He must choose (positive nomination) or reject (negative nomination) within a list constructed based on a predetermined criterion.
Scoring by classmates	The technique basically consists of the fact that each subject scores and values all the classmates of his group. Each student receives a list of all his classmates and sets a number of criteria (eg how much you like to play / work with ...). A Likert scale is used with gradations of 3 to 7 points. This way, we can value the "average acceptance" of a subject by its peer group.
"Guess Who" technique	It starts from a written or verbal list of items that describe certain behaviors (positive and / or negative). Each student describes or says the name of the child that best matches each of the descriptions and according to their opinion. For example: guess what child is always alone at recess?; Guess what child gets nervous when asked in class? <sup>9</sup>

**Table 1.** Evaluate assertiveness through classmates' answers.

Available at <http://psicodiagnosis.es/areageneral/situaciones-especiales/la-timidez-el-nio-timido/index.php>

Finally, the "Actiasert" test was used to evaluate the student's assertiveness.

<sup>8</sup> Available in: <http://www.monografias.com/trabajos91/la-asertividad/la-asertividad.shtml#ixzz2ahk6HfdT>

<sup>9</sup> Data from this test were represented using the sociogram technique. They do not appear in this work, since the technique was carried out by the tutor and considered that it is private documentation of the school. But we could observe in the results, as the student S. is not rejected but is not taken into account by most of his colleagues.

### 3.2. Anamnesis

Once all the data of the informal interview to the parents were finished, the report of the tutor of previous courses, the results of the sociogram and the result of the Actiasert test were obtained, the student's anamnesis was elaborated with all his personal, social and academic data. As well as the guidelines for action and general recommendations

#### **ANAMNESIS**

##### **- IDENTIFICATION DATA**

###### **CHILD**

Student's Name: ..... S .....

..... (I.e.

Age: ..... 10 .....

Schooling ..... 5th grade primary .....

Address: ..... XXX .....

###### **FATHER**

Name of Father ..... XXX .....

Age: ..... 49 .....

Profession or Occupation ..... bank clerk .....

###### **MOTHER**

Name of Mother ..... XXX ..... (I.e.

Age: ..... 47 .....

Profession or Occupation ..... housewife .....

###### **BROTHERS AND OTHERS: only child**

##### **II.- REASON OF THE CONSULTATION** (Include perspectives of the parents)

The tutor is concerned about the shy, submissive and not very participatory attitude of student S

The parents, after an interview with the tutor, communicate their concern about the attitude of their son and the little relationship he has with the rest of his classmates. And how his classmates make fun of him.

##### **III.- DESCRIPTION OF THE CHILD**

S. is a shy child, with a passive attitude in the classroom, although his academic performance is normal, excelling in mathematical and plastic competence. He barely interacts with his classmates, except for two friends with whom he always is. In class he never participates in group activities (unless he is forced to) and

always tries to maintain a correct attitude so as not to be scolded by the teacher.

Sociable Emotional:

Quiet, distrustful, obedient, anxious, sad, dependent, emotional, crying, introverted, withdrawn. Lately he has had problems with a group of colleagues.

Does he have problem behaviors?

He shows no aggressiveness. When he is angry, he tries to hide. Sometimes he has been the object of bullying

Sleep Disorders Eating Disorders:

Insomnia, nightmares, rejection of some foods.

#### **IV.- Development**

Pregnancy: normal,

Diseases: not known

Ingestion of Medications: normal, though somewhat lacking it appetite

Childbirth: normal

Motor development: normal for his age. He does not like to play sports, especially he does not like to play soccer. He has a very weak physical appearance.

Language Development: in early childhood, he had language delay and slight dyslalia that were treated with logopedic aid

#### **V.- Health Background:**

No major diseases are known

#### **VI.- SCHOOL HISTORY**

Age of entrance to school: in first of kindergarten

Current Schooling: currently going to 5<sup>th</sup> grade of primary education.

Evaluation of School Years: S. has successfully passed each of the objectives and contents proposed for the previous courses. He excels in mathematics, knowledge of the medium and plastic. The worst results have been obtained in physical education and language.

#### **VII.- FAMILY HISTORY**

(Breeding styles, relationship established between siblings and other relatives, cultural and recreational activities.) Morbid family history, epilepsy, mental retardation, alcoholism, psychosis, language disorders, learning disorders, etc.)

The student's parents have overprotected their child. He is an only child and therefore his parents have been very attentive to all his activity, development and needs. He neither has cousins nor relatives of his age.

#### **VIII Nowadays:**

Currently S. has an attitude detrimental to his social and personal development. It is feared to influence his academic development.

The observed behaviors are:

- Low voice volume / poor speech / blocking /
- Avoiding eye contact / low stare / taut face /

- trembling / nervous hands / tense, uncomfortable posture
- Insecurity to know what to do and say
- Thinking Patterns: He thinks this way he avoids annoying or offending others. / "What I feel, think or want does not matter, what matters is what you feel or think about me" / "It is necessary to be loved and appreciated by everyone"
- Constant feeling of being misunderstood, manipulated, ignored
- Feelings / emotions: Impotence / lots of mental energy, poor external / low self-esteem / anxiety / frustration.

The tutor of the second cycle of primary school issued a report that shows the activities to be carried out, individually, for the development of self-concept and personal autonomy. They also gave some guidelines of action to the family.

They seek to strengthen the relationship with his classmates and the teacher before the typical problems of pre-adolescence arise.

Intervention by the counselor and inclusion in the "theater workshop" program is recommended.

**Table 2:** Anamnesis of the student. Made by the author

### 3.3. Guidelines for action

We have already justified the need to help student S. to achieve positive development in the social, personal and affective field. Before proceeding to the intervention, and once we have ascertained the origin of the problem (in this case, we are talking about a child who comes from a normalized family, overprotected and since a very young age he is extremely shy), we go on to analyze other factors to consider before drawing up the intervention plan.

Following some authors, we will highlight 3 fundamental variables:

**1-Locus of Control:** This factor defines the extent to which a person perceives that the consequences are controlled by himself or by others.

What interests us here is that when S. believes that the consequences of what happens to him are, to some extent, due to his own behavior or decisions, he can understand that, by changing some of them, he can improve (internal locus of control).

**2-Irrationality:** Children with more irrational beliefs will be, therefore, those who have in their repertoire a smaller number of assertive answers and, consequently, have greater difficulties in their social relations.

**3-Level of Intelligence:** Children who quickly learn and adapt begin to develop effective interpersonal repertoires to achieve their goals, which can be reflected in their school or social performance.

Based on the study of all these factors, we can already define a plan of action adjusted to the child in which we want to promote the learning of Social Skills.

#### **3.4. Approach of the Intervention:**

Initiating an effective social skills intervention program in children and / or adolescents occurs, to our view, in a double way:

**1º- Individual work:** Depending on the results, the corresponding individual intervention to correct the deficits found must be established. For example, a cognitive training to try an internal control, that is, to begin to believe that he can, with the necessary help, influence what happens to him, on the outside world.

**2º- Group work:** If we want to work on social skills, it is evident that part of the performance that the professional carries out is through their practice in groups. **A good example is participation in a theater group or workshop where group play under the control and modeling of the therapist is usually very effective.**

However, the main challenge will be what we call "generalization", that is, the child's ability to translate what is learned in a structured situation into his natural environment. One of the basic ideas in teaching social skills is that he collectively learns the difference between passive, aggressive, and assertive social behavior. In the first case, he must realize that he is a passive observer, who does not express himself and lets others send him and does not usually defend his interests. It also means defending one's rights in a fair and sincere manner without others taking advantage of one.

This work should be complemented with homework assignments and relevant instructions to motivate the child to apply what he has learned in different situations. Follow-up by the therapist, the instructions to the family and the assurance of first achievements are fundamental to keep moving forward. Some of the aspects that must be worked both in the center and in the family are:

- Give and receive compliments
- Express complaints effectively and appropriately to the context
- Knowing how to say "no"
- Ask a favor
- Ask why properly
- Ask colleagues or friends to change behavior that disturbs us
- Defend our rights
- Start a conversation with someone who interests us
- Development of empathy
- Non-verbal social skills (gestures, gaze, distances, etc.)

- In adolescents: Establish relationships with the opposite sex
- Make rational decisions
- Know how to deal with conflicts.

As can be seen, many of the contents to work with are typical of the theater workshop program (gestures, social relations, simulate situations, expression of the body, etc.).

For this reason, it is decided to include student S. in the therapy group through the theater.

### **3.4. Triangulation: ACTIASERT reference test**

In order to evaluate the student's progress in assertiveness, we used the ACTIASERT instrument, carried out by Dolores Sánchez in 2007, which consists of an adaptation of the Assertive Behavior and Social Adaptation test, which is in turn an adaptation of the Assertive Behavior Scale (CABS) for primary school students (6-12 years old), as well as the variable resulting from the sum of two subscales of the BAS-1,2 Socialization Battery by Silva and Martorell<sup>10</sup>. With this instrument, we can initially evaluate or diagnose the degree of assertiveness of student S., before the beginning of the theater workshop and later after the course.

And for the adaptation of the items that integrate the questionnaire, we have taken into account the studies of Goldstein. Using direct observation as the most reliable instrument. The test items have been slightly modified so that they can be answered by the therapist or theatrical monitor and the student's tutor.

#### **3.4.1. Description of the instrument.**

The objective of the ACTIASERT test is to achieve a brief scale to discriminate the assertive versus non-assertive style in the initial ages of schooling. For this, the items have been simplified, with the answers reduced to three options:

- 1- I say it visibly angry (aggressive type).
- 2- I dare not say anything (inhibited type).
- 3- I say it reasoning with tranquility (competent or assertive type).

It consists of 20 items that correspond to the contents of the reference instruments insofar as they pose conflicting situations that may be presented to the subject in the school environment (Triangulation is sought through the comparison of responses in the habitual behaviors in the classroom. That is, the behavior of S. should be progressing not only in the theater workshop but also in each of the social situations in which the student is immersed. That is why the test will also be completed by the tutor).

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<sup>10</sup> Silva, F. Y Martorell, M.C. (1989): "*BAS-1,2: Bateria de Socialización*". Madrid. TEA.

### **3.5.2. Development of the Actiasert Test**

The first test was carried out in October, when the student began the 5th grade of Primary school, after the initial evaluation process. The objective was to make an initial assessment of the level of assertiveness. The tutor was asked to perform this test based on the observations he had made in the classroom, in the backyard and playground, and through the responses of the parents he had received in the tutorials. This first contact with Actiasert would serve us to initiate the therapeutic process and to know the initial levels from which to start in our action.

Once it was decided that the student would enroll in the theater workshop, and during the same period of time, the same test was applied to be completed by the theatrical monitor that could observe, in several sessions, the attitude of the student to the new challenge, before the social relation with his workshop companions and the personal relation to the monitor that directs each of the classes. Systematic observation was used and the student's different attitudes and aptitudes were recorded in the field notebook.

It is intended to carry out the triangulation of the method used and check its validity by comparing the results.

#### **Part 2 of research: Pos-test**

Student S. attended the theater workshop throughout the school year, he participated in the various activities and performances that took place. His improvement was notable in all aspects related to Emotional Competence, that is, with intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence. He improved his diction, vocabulary, postural control, personal knowledge, autonomy and self-confidence, but above all, he improved his social skills like empathy, social skills and assertiveness. This last aspect is the reason of our research and therefore, the object of study.

The following is a summary of the results of the Actiasert test completed by the tutor and the theatrical monitor at the beginning of the course and at the end of the workshop (in May, as complementary activities finish in June). Although we will go on to comment on the conclusions, at first glance it can be seen how the response in most of the items has varied remarkably. In annexes the answers to the two tests of the pre-test and pos-test can be observed.

<b>COMPARISON OF THE ACTIASERT TEST DEPENDING ON THE AUTHOR AND THE MONTH OF APPLICATION</b>		MOMENT OF THEATER - OCTOBER 2009	THEATER MONITOR - MAY 2010	TUTOR - OCTOBER 2009	TUTOR - MAY 2010
When he needs to:					
<b>1- Ask the teacher for help because he does not understand something.</b>					
	He says it nervous or angry.	X			X
	He does not dare say anything.			X	
	He says it calmly and reasoning.		X		
<b>2- Praise a classmate who has done well in class.</b>					
	He says it nervous or angry.				
	He does not dare say anything.				
	He says it calmly and reasoning.	X	X	X	X
<b>3- Ask a partner not to make fun of a defect of his.</b>					
	He says it nervous or angry.	X			X
	He does not dare say anything.			X	
	He says it calmly and reasoning.		X		
<b>4- Apologize for hurting someone.</b>					
	He says it nervous or angry.				
	He does not dare say anything.				
	He says it calmly and reasoning.	X	X	X	X
<b>5- Protesting to a friend who has come late to the appointment with him.</b>					
	He says it nervous or angry.				
	He does not dare say anything.	X		X	
	He says it calmly and reasoning.		X		X
<b>6- Admit publicly that he is sad about something.</b>					
	He says it nervous or angry.				
	He does not dare say anything.	X	X	X	X
	He says it calmly and reasoning.				
<b>7- Refuse to lend his favorite color waxes.</b>					
	He says it nervous or angry		X		X



	He does not dare say anything.	X		X	
	He says it calmly and reasoning.				
<b>8- Ask a classmate to be his friend.</b>					
	He says it nervous or angry.				
	He does not dare say anything.			X	
	He says it calmly and reasoning.	X	X		X
<b>9- Tell a classmate not to make fun of his drawing.</b>					
	He says it nervous or angry.				X
	He does not dare say anything.	X		X	
	He says it calmly and reasoning.		X		
<b>10- Tell a classmate who has slipped in the line.</b>					
	He says it nervous or angry.				
	He does not dare say anything.	X		X	
	He says it calmly and reasoning.		X		X
<b>11- Keep his opinion when it is different from the rest of the class.</b>					
	He says it nervous or angry.	X			
	He does not dare say anything.			X	
	He says it calmly and reasoning.		X		X
<b>12- Refuse to participate to make fun of a child who has fallen down.</b>					
	He says it nervous or angry.	X			
	He does not dare say anything.			X	
	He says it calmly and reasoning.		X		X
<b>13- Protest because the teacher punishes him unjustly.</b>					
	He says it nervous or angry.		X		
	He does not dare say anything.	X		X	X
	He says it calmly and reasoning.				
<b>14- Ask to get back something he lent long ago.</b>					
	He says it nervous or angry.				
	He does not dare say anything.	X		X	
	He says it calmly and reasoning.		X		X
<b>15- Defend himself if his team blames him for having lost the game.</b>					
	He says it nervous or angry.				X
	He does not dare say anything.	X		X	
	He says it calmly and reasoning.		X		
<b>16- Ask a classmate to stop and listen to the teacher.</b>					
	He says it nervous or angry.				
	He does not dare say anything.	X		X	
	He says it calmly and reasoning.		X		X
<b>17- Thank if in class they tell him that he has done the job well.</b>					
	He says it nervous or angry.				
	He does not dare say anything				

	He says it calmly and reasoning.	X	X	X	X
<b>18- Tell the teacher that he was wrong when giving him the grade.</b>					
	He says it nervous or angry		X		X
	He does not dare say anything.	X		X	
	He says it calmly and reasoning.				
<b>19- Let others decide what to do in a work.</b>					
	He says it nervous or angry.				
	He does not dare say anything.	X		X	
	He says it calmly and reasoning.		X		X
<b>20- Answer if a friend tells him that he is nice.</b>					
	He says it nervous or angry.			X	
	He does not dare say anything.				
	He says it calmly and reasoning.	X	X		X

**Table 3.** Results of the Actiasert test. Made by the author

#### 4. RESULTS – CONCLUSIONS

From the comparison of the answers given by the theater workshop monitor and the student's tutor, the first thing that strikes us is the change of attitude of the student at the end of the course. In many of the items, that change coincides both in the classroom environment and in the workshop environment, it can be verified that it is much more incipient and radical when the student is in the microclimate formed by the group of students who have participated in the therapeutic activity of the theatrical game.

Next we will analyze each one of the items:

**1. Ask the teacher for help because he does not understand something:** The basic contents that develop social assertiveness have been worked out but, in the specific case of student-teacher relationship, the achievements have been lower since student S. is still intimidated by the figure of the teacher. His attitude has improved but he still addresses the teacher nervously. Not so with the figure of the theatrical monitor that, through his participatory attitude in the sessions and the use of an active and dynamic methodology, has gotten him to accept him as another member of the group and someone to communicate with normally.

**2. Praise a classmate who has done well in class:** Here the triangulation shows that both the tutor and the monitor match the answers, therefore we can count on their consistency and validity. In the particular case of items 2, the two professionals have evaluated that S. has no problem when the objective is the valuation of something positive performed by a classmate. This occurs both at the beginning and at the end of the course because the student has a low self-concept but perceives and admires the qualities of others.

**3. Ask a classmate not to make fun of a defect of his:** This lack of self-esteem causes him to be unable to defend his right to be as he is in front of his classmates, although it is occurring in smaller environments where the student is more relaxed, accepted and respected by others. A course is little time to generalize the results, but it is a good start to the process.

**4. Apologize for hurting someone:** Children who are extremely shy have a great sensitivity to the facts they can produce in others and, in the case of S., he is a child who tries not to hurt or, if he does, he apologizes. In this item, the answers are again matched by professionals as well as by time.

**5. Protesting to a friend who has come late to the appointment with him:** The answers to this item are proof of the student's progress in some specific aspects of assertiveness, especially when it comes to peer relationships. It is also a test of how these attitudes are being generalized to other domains.

**6. Admit publicly that he is sad about something:** But something very different happens when the goal is to transmit and verbalize his feelings to others. He is prepared to recognize and name his feelings but not to share them with others and be the central axis of comments or looks.

**7. Refuse to lend his favorite color waxes:** In addition to re-checking the triangulation of results, we can see how the submissive attitude is becoming a more assertive attitude when it comes to defending his material property. He is still nervous but is able to say "no". In the theater workshop, the monitor could observe it not with school material, but with material of the activity (such as a megaphone). The tutor highlighted this progress as very positive because, in previous courses, some of his colleagues required all kinds of material, the teacher having to intervene on several occasions.

**8. Ask a classmate to be his friend:** We are going back to see how his social skills towards his peers have improved significantly. The theatrical monitor commented that this occurred in the first theater sessions. The tutor in the classroom confirmed that he was much more open and closer to established groups, although he always tried to relate to the same friends.

**9. Tell a classmate not to make fun of his drawing:** We can observe the relationship with item 3 where the student's difficulty is confirmed to defend something that he considers to be judged by others. What others think is very important for this type of children, as we emphasized at the time. These prejudices make their actions vary in relation to the criticism received. As we can verify, that influence has disappeared in the workshop since the monitor has constantly emphasized that the important thing is not the results but the effort and the intention. In a conventional classroom we know that the rivalry and the evaluation before the group is constant and, therefore, our student still reacts with much nervousness to the evaluation and mockery of the companions.

**10. Tell a classmate who has slipped in the line:** Instead, he is able to tell a classmate that he has slipped in the line because the wrong action was not committed by him, because he does not have to say it in front of the whole group and because the figure of the teacher is not present. But remember that S., at the beginning of the course, was not able to have this initiative.

**11. Keep his opinion when it is different from the rest of the class:** In this item, we re-verify how the strategy carried out has had positive results making our student a child with more assertiveness, able to defend his opinion before the group.

**12. Refuse to participate to make fun of a child who has fallen down:** Both the tutor and the monitor agree that S. is not a troubled, violent child or that he annoys his classmates, but neither was he a child who defended the others before a conflict. Thanks to the exercises of improvisation and simulation of situations, the student has obtained a range of answers to different situations in which he may be involved. These responses, according to the tutor, begin to generalize both in the classroom and in the backyard.

**13. Protest because the teacher punishes him unjustly:** As we have previously observed, the teacher figure is still a "taboo" to express and defend his feelings and ideas. He prefers to stay in the background and not attract the attention of the teacher. After the study of these items, we conclude that this aspect has not been sufficiently worked in the workshop and is pending to work in the next course.

**14. Ask to get back something he lent long ago:** The family, after commenting on the test results, confirms that S. has improved in the relationship with other children outside of school. He is already able to play in the same conditions as his friends or neighbors. He is able to leave toys and then he does not need the help of his parents or the nearby adult to retrieve them.

**15. Defend himself if his team blames him for losing the game:** This is one of the items that makes us think that, in some respects, S. has changed his attitude or way of acting in the theater workshop and that change has not been generalized to the classroom. The answer we believe is that the student is not able to maintain an assertive attitude towards a large group and especially, when the conflict falls on him. The workshop maintains an atmosphere of acceptance, variety, inclusiveness and respect for others. Perhaps our classrooms need the reinforcement of education in values, above all, the treatment of respect for diversity, acceptance of personal characteristics and acceptance of the differences of those around us.

**16. 17. 18. 19. Ask a classmate to stop and listen to the teacher. Thank if in class they tell him that he has done the job well. Tell the teacher that he was wrong when giving him the grade. Let others decide what to do in a work:** These four items deal with aspects that we have already discussed. Better assertiveness towards other colleagues and improvable before the teacher. To emphasize how the methodological triangulation has been fulfilled since the same results are obtained by the answers given by the person responsible for the theater

activity and by the tutor who has followed the trajectory in a natural and ecological way within the classroom. This makes us understand that the results obtained are not biased by the figure of the researcher, but are corroborated by the figure of the professional. Most importantly, the development of student's assertiveness has been remarkable and observable in the different educational and family settings.

**20. Answer if a friend tells him that he is nice:** This last item is in agreement with all the previous ones, but we want to take advantage to make a brief reflection of the reason why they have obtained faster and remarkable results in the therapy group that throughout the student's schooling. We start with the maturation of the student, the help received by the counselor, the family support under a series of indications received in the school and the great work done by the teachers who have cared for the student.

And once these premises are set forth, it is necessary to emphasize the participation of S. in the programmed workshop, the motivation received through the formative and recreational activities and the work developed to awaken in the child the interest to know and accept himself and then to show himself to others.

Therefore, we are talking about contents that are, unfortunately, left out of the official curriculum and the hurry for conceptual learning. We are talking about a participative, playful, dynamic methodology, new for the teacher but with a didactic and formative wealth that makes it worth "losing class time".

S. has not wasted time, he has gained much time with himself, with others or with the discovery of thousands of situations rich in relationships, meaningful learning and important memories for his integral education.

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