



## WHAT TEACHERS THINK AND WHAT THE YOUNGSTERS FEEL

### KEYWORDS

Teacher's way of thinking; Teacher's action; Youngster' behavior; Young people well-being; School success.

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**ABSTRACT** *The studies of the last three years focusing on teachers vary according to the authors' point view, however all relate to the importance of teachers' role and the way they deal with feelings.*

*This article is based on a study which was applied to 471 teachers from all over the country who have been teaching the 3rd stage of basic education and/or secondary level for several years. Therefore, the tool here used is based not only on their views but also on the relevant aspects of their daily professional routine. All these data were gathered online via lime survey platform.*

*The good teacher/pupil liaison is highlighted positively by teachers, as well as the impact or influence they have in promoting students' motivation and engagement towards school. Aspects such as the relationship of proximity, capacity of identification and intervention on risky behaviors are for the majority of our sample skills that they all possess.*

*Regardless of the interest shown and the strategies used by teachers in relation to the students, it was found that young people do not recognize them as a possibility of support when they are faced with problems/concerns.*

### INTRODUCTION

As Stronge, Ward & Grant (2011) describe the common denominator in the School improvement as well as the success of the learners is centred in the teacher.

Indeed, his role has evolved throughout the times, seeing if confronted with a panoply of new requirements that go well beyond the programmatic content (Estrela, 2010). Therefore, it is essential to analyze how they handle and manage their feelings and those of the learners in order to promote positively the pedagogical relationship.

The study of Thoonen, Slegers, Oort, Peetsma & Geijsel (2011) suggests that the feeling of teachers' effectiveness seems to be the most important motivational factor as well their commitment to activities of vocational learning, in particular the experimentation and reflection which are powerful predictors of their future teaching practices. The more critical investment that teachers can aim relates to a better qualification, in caring about their students and feeling fulfilled with his professional function (Stronge, Ward & Grant, 2011).

The classroom is the privileged space to bring together students and teachers where close relationships arise, as referred by Kirschner & Van Merriënboer (2013), one of the urban myths in education relates to the belief which depicts the idea that because the students are born in the era of new technologies they know, of course, how to take advantage of them, learn from them and be able to manage that learning. In addition to this, teachers are said to have the need to adapt to these new requirements. That vision is risky in the belief of Kirschner & Van Merriënboer (2013) because the students are not trained to know how to select and manage their learning, making it clear the teacher's role in academic profile of students.

In another pole is a different study (Alderman & Green, 2011) that analysed the developed strategies by the practice of teaching function to illustrate the usefulness of the Social Power Model in the changing of teachers/pupils relationship. According to these authors, the four types of social power that can be used by teachers to influence the students to reach the overcoming academic and behavioral success are coercion, manipulation, specialization and flexibility. They also say that the key to success depends on the balance in their use of these four types of social power, in what teachers are concerned.

Estrela (2010) mentions that the choice of the teaching profession traditionally involves a vocation based on their love for the children, the expression considered "appropriate" about this love has varied in accordance with the values and morals evolution and their profession itself.

More worrying becomes this dialectic once we realize that the school, according to the young people's opinion, is the source of their main concerns and that the strategies they use to overcome them isn't supported by their teachers (Matos, Gaspar, Cruz & Neves, 2013). This study refers, also, the need and the importance that the school has in developing strategies in order to help young people to deal with all the problems that make them feel terribly blue and distressed.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

#### Research instrument

The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire of risky behaviors of teenagers (Cruz & Matos, 2009), applied between May and December two thousand and twelve to teachers who lecture basic and secondary public school in

65 districts in the country.

The questionnaire contained 47 statements with the possibility of response on a Likert scale of 5 points, 1 - Strongly Disagree; 2 - Disagree; 3 - Do not Disagree neither Agree; 4 - I Agree; 5 - Strongly Agree. It wanted to know the teachers' opinions about their students when facing some given statements.

**Participants**

The questionnaire about teenager risky behaviors' was applied to 471 teachers, 73% female and 27% male, who were teaching in basic and secondary schools in the academic year 2011/2012 across the country. Most of them have a university degree (72 %), 25% have a master degree, 1.7% has a doctorate and 1.3% has a bachelor degree.

For a better sample characterization, it has been systematized in table 1 all the data gathered and its meaning, the median and the mode of the age, total years of service and the number of years of school service in the school they were lecturing by the time they were asked to respond to the questionnaire.

**TABLE - 1  
CHARACTERIZATION OF THE SAMPLE RELATIVELY TO AGE AND YEARS OF SERVICE**

	$\bar{X}_1$	M <sup>2</sup>	m <sup>3</sup>
Age	45,8	46	41
Total years of service	20,7	20	20
Years of service in teaching establishment	11,5	10	3

**Methodology**

The questionnaire was elaborated in the lime survey platform and its link was disseminated firstly by the personal contacts of the researcher with the attached request of responding the questionnaire and also by sending the link to other colleagues promoting this way a system of "snow ball". Secondly, the link was sent to the School Board of different schools across the country requiring the questionnaire to be sent to all school teachers, reinforcing and extending the sample this way. The possibility of repeated responses was protected and made impossible.

The present article is based on the study of the teachers' opinions about the young people at various levels, and how it affects your "look".

**RESULTS**

Bearing in mind that the aim of this article is to understand what the teachers, through their daily work, think about young people, the results will appear in tables for a better viewing and systematization of data emphasizing the most significant percentages by placing the same in bold.

On the other hand, binding together the percentage values of Strongly Disagree to Disagree and Strongly Agree and Agree we can see that the first two indicate the denial of the claims and the last two the statements confirmation.

**TABLE - 2  
IMPACT OF THE RELATIONSHIP AND ATTITUDES**

Items	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Not Disagree neither Agree	Strongly Agree/ Agree
The good relationship between the teacher and the students is one of the protective factors of risky behaviors in young people.	3.3%	14.3%	82.4%
The bad relationship of the teacher with the students is one of the decisive factors in risky behaviors of young people.	32.3%	31.4%	36.3%
The attitude of the teacher toward the students is the factor that has the greatest impact on their behavior.	18.3%	27.6%	54.1%
The teacher attitudes influence the taste of the students to School.	1.3%	7.0%	91.7%

As can be seen by the values in table 2, the teachers feel that a good teacher/pupil relationship is a determinant factor of protection in high-risky behaviors, having obtained some expressive 82.4 % of respondents who agree or strongly agree. However, when it is stated that the poor teacher/pupil relationship is one of the decisive factors in this type of young people behavior the opinions appeared distributed in a very similar way by several hypotheses (strongly disagree/disagree 32.3 %; not disagree neither agree 31.4 %; strongly agree/agree 36.3 %).

In what concerns attitudes, the teachers consider that they really influence the taste for knowledge and its pleasure on their students, besides influencing the way they look at school, noting that 91.7 % agree or agree strongly with this statement. But when you look at the school itself it refers to the fact that your attitude is the factor with the greatest impact on students' behavior only 54.1 % acquiesces, also was an increase of percentage of those who do not have formed any opinion or who did not want to respond (27.6 %).

In addition to the relationship and the attitudes, other aspects of particular importance arise; it is the case of knowledge and concerns of the students, table 3 that shows us the teachers' beliefs.

**TABLE – 3**  
**KNOWLEDGE AND WORRIES HIGHLIGHTED**

Items	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Not Disagree neither Agree	Strongly Agree/Agree
I know most of the students from my School.	32.4%	24.0%	43.6%
Students recognize me outside of the classroom and greet me.	0.2%	2.1%	97.7%
I build up a close relationship with the students in order to better perceive their problems.	1.5%	13.4%	85.1%
I build up a close relationship with the students in order to be able to intervene.	3.4%	19.2%	77.4%
The students are looking for me to talk about themselves.	8.9%	24.0%	67.1%
When a student looks for me to talk about a problem of a particular issue, I try to give him an answer.	0.2%	5.5%	94.3%
I always use some time of my classes to observe my students.	4.2%	17.0%	78.8%
I always use some extra time classroom to talk with my students.	5.1%	20.0%	74.9%
I can recognize when my students feel fulfilled with the curricular activities.	0.6%	5.3%	94.1%
I worry about the academic success of my students.	0.0%	0.6%	99.4%
I care about my students as individuals.	0.2%	0.8%	99.0%
I am concerned that students have behaviors of aggressiveness within the space of classrooms.	0.0%	0.8%	99.2%
I am concerned that students have behaviors of aggression outside the space of classrooms.	0.4%	3.4%	96.2%
I am concerned that students have behaviors of apathy within the space of classrooms.	0.2%	2.3%	97.5%
I am concerned that students have behaviors of apathy outside the space of classrooms.	2.2%	12.2%	85.6%

It is clear from the analysis of table 3, which illustrates the dispersion of teachers' views regarding the fact that knowing the majority of the students of the school where they are teaching (strongly disagree/disagree 32.4 %; not disagree neither agree 24 %; strongly agree/agree 43.6 %), because as it stands out in table 1 the number of years of service in the school where they were working by the time they responded to the questionnaire is 11 years and 6 months. However, they appear to know that the students recognize and appreciate being in an extra space classroom with an expressive number 97.7 % they assume that this happens, as well as 85.1 % establish a close relationship with the students in order to know them better and 77.4 % in order to be able to intervene. In any case, although 94.3 % of teachers when sought, by students, try to respond to their concerns, the truth is that the notion they have about the percentage of students who are asking for help drops to 67.1 %, becoming relevant to the percentage of those who do not disagree or agree (24 %).

The observation of students during classes is also a strategy used by 78.8% of the teachers who always take some extra time classroom to establish a dialog with them (74.9%).

They are also able, to recognize when their students are being accompanied and involved in accomplishing with the curricular activities (94.91 %).

The teachers' main concerns focus on both at their students' success (99.4 %) at school and as looking at them as individuals with specific idiosyncrasies (99 %). Besides this, they also seem to be really attentive to their students' behaviors not only when they show signs of of ag-

gression and apathy within the classroom (respectively 99.2 % and 97.5 %) and even with behaviors of aggression and apathy outside the classroom area (respectively 96.2 % and 85.6 %).

Analysing table 4 we will henceforth know the meaning of risky behaviors for teachers and if there is a direct or indirect intervention.

**TABLE – 1**  
**RISKY BEHAVIORS AND INTERVENTION**

Items	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Not Disagree neither Agree	Strongly Agree/Agree
I interpret attitudes of aggressiveness as risky behaviors.	5.3%	17.6%	77.1%
I interpret attitudes of apathy as risky behaviors.	10.2%	29.5%	60.3%
When I think of risky behaviors, I think more easily in attitudes of aggressiveness than in attitudes of apathy.	27.8%	16.3%	55.9%
I believe that a student who proves to be irresponsible in the classes has more tendencies to risky behaviors.	18.8%	26.8%	54.4%
I believe that a student who dresses in carelessly has more tendencies to risk behaviors.	58.6%	29.0%	12.4%

I believe that a student who wears piercings has more tendencies to risky behaviors.	71.5%	20.3%	8.2%
I believe that the majority of adolescents have risky behaviors.	59.1%	27.7%	13.2%
I believe that the risky behaviors show always a malaise/dysfunction.	10.2%	22.4%	67.4%
I connect an active participation of students in school activities with a healthy behavior.	2.8%	10.4%	86.8%
I connect an active participation of students in school activities with a good indicator of socialization at the level of their peers.	2.6%	7.2%	90.2%
I connect the academic success of my students with healthy behaviors.	3.8%	14.3%	81.9%
I connect the academic success of my students with a healthy family environment.	5.1%	17.7%	77.2%
It is the teachers' role to intervene directly inside and outside the space of classrooms in all situations.	17.6%	19.5%	62.9%
Whenever I come across a student who is smoking I directly intervene (ex. Approaching the student, I try to prevent it).	23.8%	32.9%	43.3%
Whenever I come across student who is into drugs I directly intervene (ex. Approaching the student, I try to prevent it).	15.3%	28.3%	56.4%
When I come across two students who have sex I directly intervene (ex. Approaching them, I try to persuade them not to).	21.3%	39.7%	39.0%
I believe that I should not intervene in situations such as those described in the three previous statements concerning tobacco, drugs and sex.	62.3%	24.8%	12.9%
I believe that I do not know how to intervene in situations related to tobacco, drugs and sex.	51.2%	21.2%	27.6%
I believe that in the situations set out in affirmations relating to tobacco, drugs and sex, who should intervene, is a Psychologist.	47.8%	25.5%	26.7%
I can identify if a student drinks alcohol.	7.6%	26.4%	66.0%
I can identify if a student uses drugs.	13.4%	31.7%	54.9%
I can identify whether a student has sexual risky behaviors.	42.4%	41.9%	15.7%

By observing the percentage values set out in table 4 we can see that 77.1% of respondents interpret attitudes of aggressiveness as risky behavior and 60.3 % include attitudes of apathy also in the same level. Nevertheless, when comparing the two attitudes the percentage of those who believe that the aggressiveness overlaps the apathy drops to 55.9% substantially increasing the percentage of those who do not agree.

Personality traits and body image have different meanings for the participants of this study, 54.4% consider that students who prove to be irresponsible in the classroom are more prone to risk-taking behaviors. However, students who have a scruffy style, dress carelessly or wear piercings are not considered by teachers to be more s prone to risk-taking behaviors (respectively 58.7% and 71.5 %), even because 59.1 % consider that the majority of adolescents do not have risky behaviors and when there do they always reveal a certain kind of malaise (67.4 %).

The teachers see active participation in school activities on

the part of the learners such as healthy behaviors (86.8%) and as a positive indicator of socialization among peers (90.2%) also mentioning in this list the school success as healthy behavior (81.9 %) .They believe that they are directly related to a healthy family environment (77.2 %).

When we observe the data relating to intervention in any situation we find that 62.9% of our sample considers their function to intervene directly within and outside the space of the classroom, and 62.3% believe that they are allowed to do that and that they should intervene in situations relating to the consumption of tobacco, drugs and sexual relations. Yet, when added to the equation a single intervention of a psychologist, views differ around 47.8% no, 26.7% yes and 25.5% did not agree or disagree.

Let us reflect on, only 43.3% of the teachers reported to have involved themselves in trying to dissuade a student from getting into a future addiction when facing him smoking, 56.4% involved when a student was into drugs and the percentages are more relevant and distant when the subject is sexual relations among students (strongly disagree/disagree 21.3 %, not disagree neither agree 39.7%, strongly agree/agree 39%). However, 66% of the teachers are able to identify if a student is drinking alcoholic beverages, 54.9% if he is into drugs and 15.7 % claimed to be able to identify if the students are having any sexual risk behavior.

We will continue with the data of table 5 that contains considerations concerning the ancestry of the students and their propensity to risky behaviors.

**TABLE – 5  
DESCENT OF STUDENTS AND RISK BEHAVIORS**

Items	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Not Disagree neither Agree	Strongly Agree/ Agree
I believe that students of African ancestry have a higher predisposition to risky behaviors.	70.1%	21.7%	8.2%
I believe that students of Latin American ancestry have a higher predisposition for risk behaviors.	72.5%	23.9%	3.6%
I believe that students coming from Eastern European countries have a higher predisposition to risky behaviors.	77.0%	20.5%	2.5%
I believe that students of Asian ancestry have a higher propensity to risky behaviors.	78.3%	20.5%	1.2%
I believe that students of European ancestry (not Portuguese) have a higher propensity to risk behaviors.	76.1%	22.6%	1.3%
I believe that a student of gypsy ethnicity ancestry has a higher predisposition to risk behaviors.	50.6%	24.7%	24.7%

It is observed that the teachers have expressed that the relationship of the ancestry of the students facing the predisposition of risk behavior is not relevant because mentioned in relation to African descent 70.1 %, the Latin American descent 72.5 %, the descent of Eastern countries 77 %, the Asian descent 78.3 %, the European descent (not Portuguese) 76.1 % and the gypsy ethnicity descent 50.6 %.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

We begin with the data relating to teachers, becoming relevant aspects such as the pedagogical relationship which, in the opinion of the same, when it is good is a protective factor to high-risky behaviors in young people, but when it is bad it is not considered a factor triggering these same behaviors. In this follow-up, it is curious to notice that a significant number of respondents (91.7%) consider that their attitude influence the opinion and the taste that learners develop towards school, but only 54.1 % sees their attitude as the factor with greatest impact on the students behavior.

These data suggest some inconsistency because we cannot assign cause/effect only in positive aspects of the profession. However, as Estrela (2010) refers the large number of interactions, the teachers and their students, in the educational process given the variability and instability of pedagogical situations.

In teachers' daily lives many and varied situations occur. Now taking into account the fact that one teacher has several classes per day it can easily be seen that the number of students with whom he contacts everyday is very high. Therefore, according to our sample, it is essential to establish a relationship of proximity so as to become aware of their problems and be able to intervene and help whenever students search for them to find an answer to their worries and doubts, recognizing this way all their needs.

Such as referred by Estrela (2010) it is increasingly recognized the emotional nature of teachers' work, it is understood that each one tries to give the best of himself caring for the students as individuals, for their success at school, for their behavior, whether it may be related to apathy or aggressiveness, inside and outside of the classroom.

The interpretation of risky behaviors for our teachers is related with attitudes of aggression, apathy and irresponsibility. However, when confronted with statements involving tobacco, use of "drugs" and the practice of sex, not-

withstanding 62.9% consider that it is part of their job to intervene directly inside and outside of the classroom in all situations, we concluded that the most significant percentage related only to intervention in cases of the use of "drugs" (56.4%), Estrela (2010) considers the values that teachers claim to be important in their professional conduct show a human face, marked by respect for the other person.

There is a difference in performance in relation to events, valuing some more than others, although a large number of respondents consider that they can identify situations of alcohol consumption and use of "drugs". On the other hand, it is considered that psychologists should not be the only ones to intervene (47.8 %).

Dressing and the use of some accessories are not relevant aspects for our teachers, but they consider fundamental the personality traits when we talk about risky behavior. It is also relevant that the teachers feel that the majority of young people do not have risky behaviors (59.1%) and when they seem to have it, they consider that it is the result of any kind of malaise/dysfunction (67.4 %) and that it has nothing to do or have no connotation whatsoever with his ancestry.

When we look at the data of the study based on children and adolescents (Matos, Gaspar, Cruz & Neves, 2013) we found that the school and its context represent the most prominent), concern (48.6% in the study 1 and 56.3% in the study 2), then in spite of all the effort and willingness shown by teachers the truth is that the adolescents prefer getting distract themselves (57.3% in the study 1 and 50.7% in the study 2), to seek some support to the resolution of their problems/concerns. Then there is a path to follow in order to create greater points of union between teachers and students.

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