

The social role of the school in building a culture of peace

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Abstract

The school is one of the most important spaces for promoting culture, autonomy, diversity, formal education, made up of subjects and the relationships established between them. The objective of the research was to analyze the conception of education professionals about the social role of the school in the construction of a culture of peace, having, as a starting point, the discussion about the practices of construction of a culture of peace in the school context. The methodology was based on a qualitative approach and exploratory research. The data collection instrument was the questionnaire, through Google Forms, with seven participants. The main results showed that the school plays an important role in the process of building a culture of peace, as it is the protagonist in the intellectual, social, political and ethical formation of individuals, responsible for all the educational elements present in its context.

Keywords: Social Role of the School. Culture of Peace. Educational Practices.

O papel social da escola na construção da cultura de paz.

Resumo

A escola é um dos mais importantes espaços de promoção à cultura, à autonomia, à diversidade, à educação formal, composta por sujeitos e pelas relações estabelecidas entre eles. O objetivo da pesquisa foi analisar a concepção dos profissionais da educação sobre o papel social da escola na construção da cultura de paz, tendo, como ponto de partida, a discussão sobre as práticas de construção de cultura de paz no contexto escolar. A metodologia esteve pautada na abordagem qualitativa e na pesquisa exploratória. O instrumento de coleta de dados foi o questionário, por meio do *Google Forms*, contando com sete participantes. Os principais resultados apontaram que a escola exerce papel importante no processo de construção da cultura de paz, pois ela é a protagonista na formação intelectual, social, política e ética dos indivíduos, responsável por todos os elementos educativos presentes em seu contexto.

Palavras-chave: Papel Social da Escola. Cultura de Paz. Práticas Educacionais

1 Introduction



The reflections presented in this paper arose from experiences lived in the supervised internship III of the Pedagogy course of the Federal University of Alagoas, held in a public municipal school, in a 2nd grade class of elementary school, in which it was possible to observe and experience episodes in which verbal and physical aggression occurred among children. The internship consisted in the observation, planning, and application of meetings focused on literacy and literacy, in which the textual genres news and reportage were worked on, covering text interpretation and spelling.

After the experience of episodes of physical and symbolic violence in the classroom, reflections arose about several issues, especially the motivations that lead children to these aggressions, the circumstances and contexts involved, as well as the role of the school and professionals about the appropriate actions and necessary interventions in the face of the reality of violence in the school environment. The latter was the one that caused the greatest concern, instigating the research on the culture of peace, as well as on the social function of the school, especially with regard to the construction of a non-violent, respectful, and integrating school environment.

It is understood that the school's action regarding violent situations is fundamental, for, as a humanizing and subject-forming institution, it must intervene on the several types of violence present in its environment, since everything that is inserted in the school environment is part of the pedagogical process and must awaken for the experience of human rights. The school is one of the main spaces in which the subject is built by means of multiple experiences.

According to Dupret (2002), the construction of a culture of peace is linked to the understanding of principles and values focused on justice, democracy, human rights, and respect. At school, in this way, it means to have a conception of education capable of stimulating and raising awareness, humanizing and developing affectivity, promoting the development of new behaviors and actions aimed at tolerance, non-violence, solidarity, forming understanding and dialogic people.

In this sense, the objective of this research was to analyze the conception of education professionals about the social role of the school in the construction of the culture





of peace, having, as a starting point, the discussion about the practices of construction of the culture of peace in the school context. The text is structured in two sections. In the first, a discussion about the role of the school and the challenges of the culture of peace was presented. And, finally, the possible paths for the construction of a culture of peace, from the voices of the research participants.

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2 Methodology

The research methodology was centered on the qualitative approach, in an exploratory perspective. The study was conducted in a single school that offers early childhood education and elementary school I. The technique of data collection was the application of semi-structured questionnaire, with open and closed questions, online, due to social isolation, being applied in the period from January 19 to February 3, 2021, socialized through Whatsapp with the school manager, who shared with the other education professionals. The questions in the questionnaire were directed to the understanding of the objectives proposed in the research, which will be explicit in the presentation of the results.

The data analysis was developed from the content analysis, in the perspective of Bardin (2002), having as categories the social role of the school, culture of peace, and educational practices. The construction of the analysis was developed from the participants' answers, distributed by the categories mentioned, with the intention of building a set of elements that could support the dimensions explored.

The school where the research was carried out is part of the municipal public education system of Maceió and is located in the upper part of the city. The institution serves approximately 540 students in the morning and afternoon, distributed in kindergarten and elementary school classes. The management is composed of the principal, vice-principal and two coordinators, and the number of teachers in the research period (school year 2021) was 29. According to the answers of the participants, the profile of the community is of needy people, and the biggest difficulty is to bring the parents to school. To better visualize the design of the research participants, here is chart 1:





Table 1: Profile of the research participants

POSITION	TEMPO NA ESCOLA	CODIFICAÇÃO
Coordinator	+ 6 years	C1
Coordinator	5 years	C2
Teacher	2 years	P1
Teacher	3 years	P2
Teacher	4 years	P3
Teacher	+ 6 years	P4
Teacher	+ 6 years	P5

SOURCE: Data reported by the participants

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 The social role of the school and the challenges of the culture of peace

The school, as a sociocultural dimension, is a space that must have basic resources, formed by agents that mediate knowledge, promote learning and cognitive, intellectual, and citizen development, including moral and ethical values.

The school is one of the most important spaces for promoting culture, autonomy, diversity, formal education, composed of subjects and the relationships established among them. According to the Federal Constitution of 1988, article 205, "education, a right of all and duty of the State and of the family, will be promoted and encouraged with the collaboration of society, aiming at the full development of the person, his preparation for the exercise of citizenship and his qualification for work".

The role of the school in the lives of the students, the family, and the community is to promote knowledge through access, the right, enabling the student to build cognitive knowledge, as well as its development in a formative perspective that establishes different types of knowledge. The school has the role of providing the formation of the individual as a social being who is knowledgeable, thinking, critical, participating, and active in various social contexts in which those involved are inserted.





In the view of Dusi (2006), the experience of collectivity and multiple experiences contributes to the realization of scenarios of emancipation of the subjects, favoring autonomy, social participation, knowledge of reality, and attitude to carry out possible transformations of reality. The culture of peace contributes, in this sense, to the existence of the social function of the school based on the democratic and humanizing perspective.

The social function of the school is not only linked to systematized knowledge, but to the integral formation of the subject, including personal development, citizenship, and professionalization. It is a space in which the values mediated and experienced at school should be as relevant as the knowledge. The school is responsible for all the educational elements present in its context, since they reflect on learning and on the construction of a peaceful environment.

The culture of peace is a necessary way of life that must be permanent among human beings, starting from the principle of learning to be and, consequently, learning to live together, based on moral and ethical values (DUSI, 2006). Education must contemplate a learning that involves human rights, cultural plurality, values, and citizenship.

When reflecting on traditional educational practices, it is understood that they are practices marked by the promotion of individualism, competitiveness, passivity, and dependence, by means of rigid pedagogical processes, authoritarian and unilateral listening. Many aspects of this educational context can be observed in today's school, which is contrary to the idea of promoting a culture of peace.

The Common National Curricular Base (2018), through the general competencies of Basic Education, states that the school must ensure the student's access to historically constructed knowledge, the exercise of scientific, critical, and creative thinking, the appreciation of cultural diversity, the stimulation of communication in its various forms, the appropriation of digital culture, the understanding of the world of work and life project, the development of argumentation, self-knowledge and self-care, the exercise of empathy and cooperation, as well as responsibility and citizenship.

These references are related to an educational context that develops values. Therefore, the school is responsible for promoting a pedagogical process that reflects the





values of peace, welcoming, mutual help, respect, solidarity, and empathy, among other aspects. Dusi (2006, p. 50) states that:

[...] values are pointed out as necessary components for education for peace, and they must be approached and experienced through practices that favor the exercise of solidarity, tolerance, fraternity, ethics, justice, respect and dignity among all, having repercussions on the relationships among individuals, groups and nations.

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Until today, the culture of peace is a theme whose discussions have been recurrent due to its relevance in contemporary times, from other issues thought and discussed on behalf of the effectiveness of the culture of peace, as a mechanism to regulate conflicts, transform reality through political strategies, aiming to build a better world, more just, supportive and fraternal.

According to Rabbani (2003, p. 65), the culture of peace had its origin after World War II, when thinkers began to reflect on the possible causes of war in order to conquer peace. Thus, the term "culture of peace" originated, which was thought of in the beginning for the scope of school education and, soon after, for other contexts, including at the level of borders between countries in the world. The culture of peace, in the field of thought and ideas, has been gaining proportions, becoming the target of discussions, thus being propagated and attracting many supporters. It is understood that its emergence had, as its objective, to be a mediating instrument in the fight against violence, which has left its marks and, until today, continues to be disseminated in the several existing contexts and in all social classes.

Violence is understood as everything that makes human development impossible in the various aspects. This concept can be extended to wars and homicides, poverty and material privations, repression and the deprivation of human rights, as well as the alienation or denial of personal needs (DUSI, 2006, p. 17). Based on this idea, it can be seen that, when it comes to violence, it presents itself through more than one type, such as physical, through force, causing bodily harm, or psychological, verbal, and cultural violence, which occurs through acts of destruction of cultural symbols.





Currently, specifically in the educational field, there has been much discussion about cultural plurality, dealing with the differences between people in the most varied aspects and, especially, with regard to culture as a practice in the life of the individual, as a result of the various contexts in which he or she has been inserted. The lack of understanding about the distinctions between people generates the non-acceptance of the subjects and their way of life, which makes society a breeding ground for prejudice, intolerance, disrespect, and several other types of violence.

Violence has also invaded the school environment and is a problem that needs to be widely discussed in order to find solutions or alternatives to control this difficult agent that disturbs school and family life. It is necessary that we seek to reverse this situation through educational, ethical and affective alternatives that can effectively contribute to the construction of a culture of peace (ATAÍDE, 2000, p. 13)..

The present complex and challenging social context calls for a change starting from the breaking of paradigms such as the conception of a single model of culture, of a standard subject, in order to have a harmony regarding the positive coexistence between people from the differences. It is necessary that the implementation of the culture of peace, as the main social didactic-pedagogical tool, continues to be worked on from all public political investments in favor of building a culture of peace, through which human development will take place.

Violence may arise from the non-mediation of conflicts (DUSI, 2006), thus, it can be deduced that where there is difference, minimized thinking, and absence of dialogue, consequently, there will be conflicts. In fact, conflict is present in all human contexts and relationships. In order to clearly understand the concept of conflict, Galtung (1978, p. 486 apud DUSI, 2006, p.16) defines it as incompatibility between goals and values held by actors in a social system. However, the conflict for purposes of implementing the culture of peace, from the educational sphere, presents itself as the main means by which education professionals will have access to observe, mediate and, as a result, train and, together with public policies, intervene through the adoption of measures that can impact on the various other contexts of the child, such as family, economic and social.





With this, conflict is the main means of access, area of action for everyone who is in charge of being a mediator in the diverse situations, manifested among students and other people with their peers. It is possible to notice that this is also one of the main challenges for the construction of a culture of peace, since it is easy to notice the lack of ability to resolve conflicts in the school environment, from the observations made during the supervised internship.

Thus, reflecting on this challenge allows us to note a number of difficulties present in the school context that prevent the implementation of a culture of peace, such as professional training, lack of working and teaching conditions, lack of public policies, management models, as well as the various contexts that interfere in the educational, organizational and cultural processes.

3.2 The possible paths for building a culture of peace: listening to the voices of the participants

When asked if they had ever witnessed any episodes of violence among children at school, 1 (one) teacher answered no and the other participants said yes..

Violent jokes, physical violence (C1).

Physical aggression, bullying, racial prejudice, belittling (C2).

In kindergarten, students don't know how to deal with sharing objects and toys, so they sometimes fight (P2).

Physical violence and bullying (P3).

Verbal and physical (P4).

Contextualizing violence in a historical perspective, one can notice that there are historical scenarios that were the stage of violence, such as the holocausts that marked the first and second world wars, adding to the current problems that portray the most diverse types of violence disseminated through the media. This propagation does not only affect ideologies and self-interest, but it is possible to notice that there is a direct influence on the family and social context, leading the individual to internalize violence. When not, violence is present in the family and social context of the subject, who takes it as a natural behavior (DUSI, 2006).





It is possible to notice, from the answers of the respondents, that violence is present at school. This environment may be influenced by the violent practices in which the students are inserted, and may also be reinforcing and inciting these practices through external and internal behaviors in the school environment.

In relation to interventions in episodes of violence, 5 teachers said they had already carried out interventions in the school environment..

Bring the case to the attention of the school management. Call parents and/or guardians to be aware of the violent action, etc. (C1).

Talk to the children involved, reflect about what happened; call parents or guardians to be aware and help their children; accompany them for a certain time with actions and activities that help them change their attitudes in a conscious way (C2).

I try to help in the solution through dialog and reflection (P2).

Talking and separating fights (P3).

Dialog (P4).

According to the National Curricular Parameters (BRASIL, 1997, p. 73), "the school is responsible for the moral formation of its students". Rules, textbooks, forms of evaluation, institutional organization, school management, among others, reflect the values and principles that influence the life and formation of students. Thus, the school has a fundamental role in the work of these values. Observing the strategies developed by those involved, we notice the importance of establishing a dialogue among all those who make up the school, in the perspective of conflict resolution.

Regarding the interventions in episodes of violence, Dusi (2006, p. 59) points out that "[...] the methodological problems that teachers face to work with them make the task unfeasible because they do not know how to approach them in everyday life, resulting in the deficiency of educational models capable of sensitizing, stimulating, or guiding individual or collective attitudes. It is understood, then, that the difficulty of intervening in episodes of violence stems from methodological issues faced by educators in the work of education for peace in everyday life.

In relation to the conflicts at school among students, the research subjects analyzed:





In view of the environment outside the school, students live with numerous acts of violence (society), and tend to express such acts at times when they are at school (C1).

What weighs a lot is the social issue, the family experiences that most of the times are not good at all, among other issues (C2).

Which in most cases are easy to solve through dialogue (P2).

Worrying (P3).

In general, the conflicts are a reflection of the existing adversities, of the experiences, defenses, or acts experienced (P5).

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It is necessary to have the understanding that conflicts originate from the differences between people. It is the divergence of thoughts, contexts, values, interests that generate conflicts between individuals, and this brings personal development. They are inevitable, but the way in which conflicts are mediated is what may define them as positive or negative and, from this, generate violence or not.

Callado (2004 apud DUSI, 2006, p. 16) states that "in a positive perspective of peace, conflict is no longer avoided but defined as a fact that is consubstantial and necessary to interpersonal relationships. From this perspective, it should be noted that the culture of peace can be built with strategies that enable conflict resolution, through dialogue, reflection, negotiation and mediation of education professionals with students, so that, little by little, this culture is established at school, from experiences.

About the understandings about the culture of peace, the professionals highlighted:

A culture where harmonious social coexistence, mutual respect, and a spirit of solidarity are established (C1).

Established attitudes that favor experiences of peace and not violence. A change in behavior, starting from reflections that lead the individual to perceive himself as well as to understand and decide to live with nature and his fellows in a way that spreads peace (C2).

Dialog as a pacifier of conflicts (P1).

That everyone should respect the other as he or she is. And that through dialog and respect we can avoid violence and make the world a better place (P2).

Living in an environment of respect (P3).

It is about proposing mediation, dialog, trying to solve conflicts, violent actions, and respecting the diversity of ways of acting and thinking (P4).

Promote moments of conflict prevention from the development of human relations (P5).

Based on the statements of the participants, it is perceptible an understanding of the culture of peace, which is close to the problem that has been discussed and defended





by researchers in the area (ATAÍDE, 2006; DUSI, 2006). However, the culture of peace is based on human values, which need to be put into practice in the school environment, in order to move from a state of intention (speech) to the exercise of action (practice), and this depends on people's commitment.

It is relevant and necessary that the formation of educators does not require reflections in search of instrumental knowledge, considering the teaching of the contents in a way that is articulated to the integral formation of the student. The model of education for peace requires information about peace and a repositioning in the teaching and learning process, conforming to the values of peace, establishing coherence between discourse and pedagogical action.

As for the possibility of building a culture of peace at school, the research participants brought the possible actions or practices that can promote this construction in everyday school life.

Promoting work aimed at consolidating peace among students and the entire school team. Always keeping constructive dialogues of peace, promoting lectures of an educational nature regarding harmony, peace and interpersonal relationships (C1).

Implementing peace week at school; promoting interesting lectures for students and family members with the theme; promoting recreational activities that have the culture of peace as a backdrop, such as gymkhanas, sports tournaments, etc. Promote pedagogical projects that involve the theme; testimonials of people who lived in a culture of violence, but who, at a certain moment in life, decided to change teams and today wear the shirt of the culture of peace; not only work the theme with the students, but mainly with all the employees and teachers so that they are the first to give good examples and thus inspire our children (C2).

Intervention of possible conflicts through dialogue and encouraging respect for differences (P1).

Through projects focused on the theme of violence (P2).

With games and events proposing respect and unity (P3).

First, in all schools there should be a psychologist, constructive workshops for the students (P4).

Through pedagogical planning, including cultural diversity and the importance of each individual in the process (P5).

The strategies highlighted by educational professionals are important ways to achieve the culture of peace at school, especially by understanding that the school is formed by different people, who have relevant roles to be fulfilled in the social sphere. In this way, it is emphasized that building a culture of peace is a task for everyone.





Regarding the vision on the relationship between the social role of the school and the construction of a culture of peace, the professionals highlighted:

School is a determining institution in the construction of the process of social coexistence to the detriment of peaceful life (C1).

I understand this relationship as very favorable for promoting education for peace (C2).

The school, in itself, already plays a role of mediator and social transformer; the public school is the stage of great diversity (P1).

The school has fundamental importance in this process of building a better, fairer world. Where everyone respects and values the other as he/she is (P2).

A good way to understand the student and help in his behavior (P3).

Promoting lectures, inviting people to be mediators (P4).

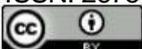
The social role of the school is fundamental, because by working on human particularities and their variants at school, showing how much each one can contribute to the improvement of all, the culture of peace will be spread (P5)..

The culture of peace is a significant and necessary theme for the construction of an inclusive and democratic model of society, having, as its main promising ground, the school, which aggregates a social and cultural diversity. The culture of peace requires an integrated work, starting from the whole professional body of the school, involving parents and the community, in order to conduct the pedagogical work for changes in the behavior of those involved.

The distance from the culture of peace, still present, persists as an obstacle in the path of education based on peace, and this is due to a lack of training for education professionals. The school plays a crucial role in the intellectual and moral formation of individuals, since it is one of the main institutions to contribute to the formation for peace, since "school interaction is configured as a key element in the ethical formation of students and, at the same time, as the most powerful instrument that the school has to fulfill its task in this respect" (DUSI, 2006, p. 74).

When asked about the contribution of the PPP, the curriculum and the management model for the implementation of the culture of peace and how this consolidation occurs, the professionals said:

Yes. Within its constructions stated in a determinant of elaborations of structuring actions in the organizational process and pedagogical development (C1).





Absolutely. With its vision of the world, society, education, and man based on an education for peace. And so the PPP, the curriculum, and the management model will all be with their actions contributing to the much desired culture of peace (C2). Yes, from the moment it contemplates the coloring of each one for the construction of a more just society (P2).

Yes, with directed projects and planning (P3).

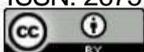
Yes, when it is thought in the whole, from the community where the school is inserted, to the reality of the students' families, aiming at the personal and intellectual development of the students, because they are people who have different histories, cultures, and realities that need to be contemplated (P5).

When analyzing the educators' answers, we find common affirmations as to the certainty of the contribution of the PPP, the curriculum, and the current educational management model. However, since these are crucial pedagogical instruments for the consolidation of a humanizing education, only two answers fully address the issue of building the PPP, adapting the curriculum, and changing the current model of education. Thus, it is clear that it is by fostering a critical consciousness that social transformation is favored and, in view of this, the educational process becomes the responsibility not only of the people directly involved with the school teaching staff, but also of the whole community involved.

The reality regarding the public present in schools is that they are divergent people in terms of ethnicity, social status, family income, parents' education, future expectations, among others. The main commitment of the school is to educate for life and form citizens, being fundamental the creation of spaces, projects, activities, and opportunities through which the students learn to dialogue, respect others, live with differences, deal with conflicts, work in groups, and control aggressive impulses. When the teaching work does not count on collective participation, the transmission of any content results in a violent practice, even if it is presented under the label of science.

When questioned if the school students are explicitly informed about the rules of discipline and interpersonal relationships and in what way this occurs, the professionals affirmed:

Through activities aimed at the practice of peace, formal and informal conversations with students to make them aware of their actions, with the intention of forming a sense of love for others and harmonious coexistence (C1).





Yes, mainly by building their own rules of coexistence in the classroom and throughout the school together with the teacher. The physical education teachers, like the music teachers, also make them understand that it is necessary to have rules to generate good results. Talking to the students individually and collectively, going to the classes, observing them and having dialogue (C2).

Yes, since the beginning of the school year, the teacher works in the classroom on themes related to human relations in the classroom and school (P2).

Yes, conversations and posters (P3).

Yes, in the classroom, in dynamics, music class (P4).

As for the pedagogical practice aimed at humanization through disciplinary rules and interpersonal relationships, the participants' points are positive, in coherence with what the culture of peace designates. The culture of peace proposes to consider the fight against violence as an educational priority due to society being "trapped" by the constant presence of several types of violence. Starting from the principle that violence is complex and systemic, for the implementation of the culture of peace, it is necessary to have a realistic diagnosis, analysis, planning with the ability to apply, procedural evaluation of the negative and positive results.

About the approach of subjects such as peace, ethics, citizenship, tolerance and cultural diversity in the classroom with the students, the research subjects highlighted:

Working disciplinary contexts that value peace (C1).

Projects, curricular themes, transversal themes, social events as well as in the school environment, etc. (C2).

During the school year, we work on themes related to interpersonal relationships (P2).

Activities works, videos, stories and games (P3).

Texts, songs, stories, movies (P4).

The culture of peace to be achieved at the most varied levels of social relations requires an effort to make people aware of the existence of human multidimensionality, the purpose of their existence and their destiny. Thus, educating for peace must be present in all ideas, words, attitudes, and at all times, because every educational action aims to achieve a goal involving the different elements that permeate the educational routine, interfering directly in the construction and experience of peace in the school environment.

About the students' protagonism and the school's search for partnership with the students in the solution of problems and difficulties presented, the professionals replied:

Yes, through dialogue, trust and respect (C2).





Yes, by bringing in the family to understand the reason why the student is going through. Through the school's social assistance, working together to help the student overcome his relationship difficulties (P2).
Trying the best with dialogue and help from the family (P4.).

Observing the answers, one can notice the absence of this partnership with the students. Seeking this involvement with them allows them to become mediators to others, facilitating the work of awareness. Dusi (2006, p. 167) highlights, as a specific action favorable to the construction of peace in the educational and intra-school ambit, the "stimulus to the students' protagonism in the care of the school institution, through campaigns and experiences that favor the awareness and the construction of the feeling of belonging to the school space".

4 Concluding remarks

The scenario of violence present in society is a universal problem that goes beyond the school environment, but the school is one of the main spaces where this reality can be worked on, because it is there that the subject is built through multiple experiences. Thus, it is understood its role of forming the individual as a knowledgeable, thinking, critical, participating, and active social being in various social contexts, intervening, mediating, and guiding in the midst of conflicts, in order to build a non-violent, respectful, and integrating school environment.

The voices of the participants in this research demonstrated the need for a greater appreciation of this theme in the school environment, so that there is an awareness and modification in the actions and interventions in order to build a culture of peace not only focusing on the absence of violence, but with the presence of respect, tolerance, solidarity, democracy and dialogue in conflict resolution and in the coexistence of the whole school community.

It became evident the need to establish a collective construction with the participation of parents, students, teachers, managers and other school employees, through a democratic management; a greater professional qualification in relation to the theme aiming at the appropriate means of intervention; the idealization of projects and





actions aimed at the culture of peace; the construction of an environment of peace in the school routine with coherence between theory and pedagogical action.

Finally, it is understood that the school plays an important role in the process of building a culture of peace, for it is the protagonist in the intellectual, social, political and ethical formation of individuals, responsible for all the educational elements present in its context and one of the main institutions that can contribute to the formation for peace. The construction of the culture of peace is a responsibility of all social spheres, however, the school, for being the protagonist of basic educational actions, stands out in this complex role.

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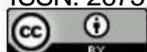
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