

THE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST'S ROLE ACCORDING TO TEACHERS: A BIOECOLOGICAL APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research was to understand, from a Bioecological approach, the role of the school psychologist according to the perspective of early childhood and elementary school teachers in a private school in the city of Recife. Individual interviews were conducted with 10 teachers. Data were analyzed using the Thematic Content Analysis Technique. Three categories were identified (frequent activities of the psychologist, role of the psychologist, and the psychologist's conception) that revealed the recognition of the psychologist's active posture, considered a professional with a differentiated look and whose performance is focused on students, their families, and teachers, while creating a space for exchange and partnership. The ecological transition and the proximal processes play a fundamental role in understanding the role of the school psychologist. This understanding, by the teachers, is in accordance with the new model of performance expected from this professional – preventive and relational practice – rather than old paradigms.

Keywords: School Psychology; the psychologist's role; bioecological approach; school psychologists; teachers

El papel del psicólogo escolar según profesores: un abordaje bioecológico

RESUMEN

El objetivo de esta investigación fue comprender, a partir del abordaje bio ecológica, el papel del psicólogo escolar según la perspectiva de profesores de la educación infantil y enseñanza básica de una escuela particular en la ciudad de Recife. Se realizaron entrevistas individuales con 10 profesoras. Los datos se analizaron por intermedio de la Técnica de Análisis de Contenido Temática. Se identificaron tres categorías (actividades frecuentes del psicólogo, papel del psicólogo, y concepción de psicólogo) que apuntaron el reconocimiento de la postura activa del psicólogo, considerado un profesional con mirada diferenciada y cuya actuación está volcada al alumno, a su familia y a los profesores, posibilitando un espacio de cambios y alianzas. La *transición ecológica* y los *procesos proximales* tienen papel fundamental en la comprensión de la actuación del psicólogo escolar. Esa comprensión, por parte de las profesoras, está de acuerdo con el nuevo modelo de actuación esperada de ese profesional – la práctica preventiva y relacional – en detrimento del antiguo paradigma.

Palabras clave: Psicología Escolar; actuación del psicólogo; psicólogos escolares, profesores

O papel do psicólogo escolar segundo professores: uma abordagem bioecológica

RESUMO

O objetivo desta pesquisa foi compreender, a partir da abordagem bioecológica, o papel do psicólogo escolar segundo a perspectiva de professores da educação infantil e do ensino fundamental de uma escola particular na cidade do Recife (PE). Foram realizadas entrevistas individuais com 10 professoras. Os dados foram analisados por meio da Técnica de Análise de Conteúdo Temática. Foram identificadas três categorias (atividades frequentes do psicólogo, papel do psicólogo, e concepção de psicólogo) que revelaram o reconhecimento da postura ativa do psicólogo, considerado um profissional com olhar diferenciado e cuja atuação é voltada ao aluno, à sua família e aos professores, possibilitando um espaço de trocas e parcerias. A *transição ecológica* e os *processos proximais* têm papel fundamental na compreensão da atuação do psicólogo escolar. Essa compreensão, por parte das professoras, está de acordo com o novo modelo de atuação esperada desse profissional – a prática preventiva e relacional – em detrimento do antigo paradigma.

Palavras-Chave: Psicología Escolar; atuação do psicólogo; psicólogos escolares; professores

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INTRODUCTION

In 1962, psychology was legally recognized in Brazil as a profession and one of its practice fields was school. The application of psychology knowledge in the field of education, however, is older than that: the practice of school psychology followed the very development of psychology as a science (Dias, Patias, & Abaid, 2014). The practice of school psychologists, since then, has gone through diverse changes. In the 1970s and 1980s there was plenty of criticism regarding the psychometrist practice, which was excluding, regulatory, and was based on linear causalities and the clinical models that were acritical regarding interventions at school (Andrada, 2005; Brasileiro & Souza, 2010; Carvalho & Marinho-Araújo, 2009; Pereira-Silva, Andrade, Crolman, & Mejía, 2017).

Nowadays, according to Oliveira and Marinho-Araújo (2009), there is a search by school psychology for a practice that is based on growth and success for all actors in school education rather than emphasis on problems and difficulties. This focus on parameters of success rather than failure aims at solidifying a practice of preventive and relational character. The current trend, according to Andrada (2005), is the relational practice based on a model of circular causality, in which working on interdisciplinarity proves essential. Santos (2009) agrees with that by saying that the formation and the work produced by school psychologists are interdisciplinary by nature, and it is not possible to work efficiently at school without a favorable interaction with fellow educators. The production of efficient interventions is obtained when the practice of school psychologists is connected with social interactions, inside and outside school.

Another important basis for the practice of school psychologists is the analysis of the institution. It is not possible to work in a decontextualized way; it is necessary to get to know the dynamics of the school, its organizational culture and necessities. This is due to the fact that the parameter for the practice of school psychologists is obtained by means of the emergent necessities of each school, taking into consideration the relations the school constitutes as well as historical, social, and cultural roots, while understanding school as a producer and a product of such cultural-historical relations (American Psychological Association [APA], 2018; Correia & Campos, 2004; Del Prette & Del Prette, 1996; Moura & Facci, 2016; Oliveira & Marinho-Araújo, 2009).

A considerable number of authors (Andrada, 2005; Carvalho & Marinho-Araújo, 2009; Oliveira & Marinho-Araújo, 2009; Sullivan & Long, 2010; Vokoy & Pedrosa, 2005), agrees that the practice of psychologists must be critical, contextualized, and based on the interdisciplinary paradigm with the objective to produce reflection and transformation, and extensively

intervening with all components involved and the teaching-learning process. School psychology must also be institutional, relational, collectively constructed and a promoter of awareness and prevention. It's important to understand how the practice of psychologists, especially school psychologists, is perceived by the people involved in the several spheres in which practice takes place in order to identify what the demands and expectations of this population are.

A research realized in Minas Gerais on the role played by school psychologists in the conception of teachers and other professionals at a private school revealed that the view of a clinical practice based on linear causality is still present. The results of the investigation indicated that teachers and administration professionals regard school psychologists as "specialists", who have knowledge and skills that are indispensable when it comes to solving certain problems that students might have. However, these same educators see school psychologists as auxiliary professionals, or accessories, and that there is not much of a necessity for their services, and that they can be requested only at moments that are considered difficult or unsolvable" (Pereira-Silva et al., 2017, p. 413).

According to the research by Bastos and Pylro (2016), The comprehension of teachers regarding the function and the possibilities of the interventions by school psychologists still reproduce the history of the practice of these professionals in Brazil. According to the teachers who were interviewed for this research, the practice of school psychologists should focus primarily on "problem" students and their families. Once again, the vision of clinical model for practice remains central.

Another study that aimed at analyzing expectations and opinions by teachers regarding the insertion and the role played by psychology at school, realized with teachers in public schools in the municipality of Porto Alegre revealed in their results, conceptual mistakes regarding the role played by school psychologists, especially when it comes to the possibilities of interventions by psychology in this context (Giongo & Oliveira-Menegotto, 2010).

New emerging contexts and realities review conflicts that have increasingly demanded the intervention of psychologists at school (Dias et al., 2014). The new psychologists have the responsibility to consolidate their professional space by means of psychological practices that promote that social recognition of the profession and affirm the identity of school psychologists as agents of transformation and non-conformism.

Considering that the comprehension of school psychology, that is, the opinion that the population has on who its professionals are and how they can work are elements that can provide subsidy for discussions, future research works and the reflections on the practice. Several researchers (Dias et al., 2014; Pereira-Silva, 2017; Bastos & Pylro, 2016) believe in the necessity

that more empirical investigations are conducted on the practice of psychologists in diverse school contexts. In this sense, it is important to emphasize that, according to Bronfenbrenner (1979/1996, p. 87): “different types of environment originate distinct patterns of agency, activities, and the relations for the people who become participants in these environments”. Thus, the present research aimed at understanding, by means of the bioecological approach, the role played by psychologists at school according to the perspective of teachers in child and elementary education.

The bioecological approach of Urie Bronfenbrenner seems to be a suitable theoretical choice for this task. It emphasizes the psychological processes by means of content and considers that they change according to exposure and interaction with the environment. One of the cornerstones of this approach is the PPCT model, which establishes 4 basic nuclei that are dynamic and interrelated: *person*, which concerns the personal qualities, dispositions, experiences, demands, bioecological resources and skills; *proximal processes*, which are long-lasting forms of interaction in the immediate context, which includes the systems (*micro-, meso-, exo- e macro-*); and *time*, which can be understood as development in the historical sense (Bronfenbrenner, 1979/1996; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). The focus is on the way the environment is perceived by human beings who interact in it and with it in a systemic vision. “In the ecological research, the peculiarities of the person within the environment, the structure of the scenarios, and the processes that take place within and among them must be considered as independent and analyzed in terms of systems” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979/1996, p. 33).

Based on this theoretical focus, it is possible to ask the following question: how do the interactions of psychologists in the school context take place from the perspective of teachers? How do proximal processes constitute themselves among teachers and school psychologists? How do proximal processes influence the conceptions of teachers on the practice of school psychologists? Thus, it is intended that the present research contributes not only to the academic sphere, but also to the practice of school psychologists, because it will lead to a deeper reflection on the practice.

METHOD

It is a qualitative study with ten teachers from a medium sized private school in the city of Recife (PE) from June to December of 2018. The sample was intentional by convenience and the gathering of data was realized by means of semi structured interviews. The data were analyzed in accordance with the Theme Content Analysis Technique, or “Técnica de Análise de Conteúdo Temática” (Minayo, 2013). The Norms of the Resolution 510/16 from the National Health Council, or “Conselho Nacional de Saúde” (CNS) were contemplated

in all stages of the research, which was authorized by the CEP/FPS by decision CAAE no. 88209518.6.0000.5569.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

10 teachers participated in the research, five were in elementary education and five were in child education; their names were replaced by fictitious ones for confidentiality. The names were inspired by flowers. All participants were female and had at least one specialization degree that had been concluded or was ongoing. It is important to highlight the fact that that researched institution has a peculiarity, the “psychology class” which is a class dedicated to psychologists, which happens every two weeks so that these professionals can go into the classroom and work on something of their choice with the class. In addition, in child education the psychologist goes into the classroom once a week to observe the class. That way, the reference of the teachers to the psychologist’s class was present in several reports during the interviews. Based on the analysis of the content of the interviews realized with these teachers, 3 categories were identified: the psychologist’s frequent activities, the role played by the psychologist and the conception of the psychologist.

The psychologist’s frequent activities

The teachers reported that some of the frequent psychologist’s activities included class observation and student monitoring; assistance/mediation with families; orientations to teachers on how to work the students difficulties; production of interventions; the creation of projects to be worked in the classroom; the proposition of studies for teacher capacitation; the execution of activities for the development of children as citizens and as individuals. It is possible to observe that the activities of the psychologists are not focused only on the students but also on their families and teachers. The reports by Rosa and Lily, respectively, highlight the good relationship between teachers and psychologists, as well as the active stance of the psychologists which lead to a space of exchange and partnership:

“They also talk to us to get to know what’s going on, how are things going in the classroom, if we have any difficulty”. (Rosa)

“And there was also the partnership thing, we were always talking to each other always providing each other with help”. (Lily)

Regarding the monitoring of the students, it was perceived as continuous and up close, which made it possible to get to know the peculiarities of each child and plan interventions and guidance for parents. It can be identified in the reports by Iris, Jasmine, and Acacia, respectively:

“They monitor the students since... Most of the students have been here since they were very

little, so we know the students and their families very well.” (Íris)

“So she gives us tips on how such and such thing can be worked at home.” (Jasmin)

“The psychologist knows each case, right?, and everything is very specific for each child. That is when she starts an intervention (...) We really manage to make the child overcome these difficulties, you see.” (Acácia)

Based on these reports, it is possible to observe that the recognition of the good relationship between teachers and the psychologist, as well as the active stance posed by the psychologist in the school context and the opportunity for exchanging partnerships among all actors involved in the teaching learning process (Teachers, students and families), indicates the comprehension that these teachers show on the practice of the school psychologist and that is in agreement with what Andrada (2005), Carvalho and Marinho-Araújo (2009), Oliveira (2009), Sullivan and Long (2010) and Vokoy and Pedrosa (2005) advocate in this regard, that is, a contextual practice that is interdisciplinary, relational, and collectively constructed.

The characteristics highlighted in the reports above also constitute characteristics of the proximal processes. Proximal processes are the long-lasting patterns of reciprocal interactions of an individual in the immediate context, including people, objects, and symbols. The main characteristics of these processes are the reciprocity, which emphasizes that the relations of people with the environments are bidirectional; The power balance, which is a reference to the establishment of relations that are more horizontal and with less hierarchy; and the affection relation, which regards the affection content of relations (Bronfenbrenner, 1979/1996; Griffore & Phenice, 2016). The connection established between psychologists, the students, and the families due to the long-term monitoring mentioned in the reports above by Iris and Acacia, for example, constitute the affection content of these relations.

The role of psychologists

The roles, as well as the activity factors and the interpersonal relations, constitute the building blocks of the micro system, that is, its elements. Bronfenbrenner Understands roles by means of the definition that is used in the social sciences: A set of behaviors and expectations associated to a position in society (Bronfenbrenner, 1979/1996). The ecological perspective understands that the conceptions of the teachers on what the psychologist’s role would consist of are a result of interactions within such micro system and of the way these interactions and the environment are perceived.

According to the teachers, the psychologist’s role

would consist of: working with prevention, providing guidance and alerting families and other professionals of the institution about matters regarding working with children; monitor the development of the class; provide balance in the environment for students, or among the teachers and other professionals; providing guidance for teachers concerning difficult situations; and keep monitoring the students and their parents. Teacher Dália pointed at three functions that would be the responsibility of the school psychologist:

“(...) It is a professional that provides us with pedagogical support, and also a professional that provides us with support concerning the behavior of students with special needs (...) And also mediates the relation between parents and school. Our school psychologist serves these three functions.” (Dália)

Daisy talks about the role of providing balance to the environment:

“In my opinion it is basically a professional that is going to provide balance to the environment, right? Balance among teachers, among the diverse professionals that work in the school, and especially among students. (...) I believe their practice has a lot to do with the providing the environment with balance (...).” (Daisy)

An interesting thing is that this report includes the diverse professionals working at the school, which implies that psychologists might intervene, according to Santos (2009), with all components involved in the teaching learning process. In addition, the role of “providing the environment with balance among actors” contributes to the construction of more horizontal relations, Regarding the lesser hierarchy and the greater balance in the exercise of power, which is one of the important characteristics of the proximal processes.

The role played by the psychologist as partner and supporter for teachers is expressed in the report by Lily: *“(...) perceiving the child’s necessity; you might be working and being a partner to teachers, you see, to be able to provide teachers with guidance regarding educational matters.” (Lily)*

In the teachers’ reports, it was possible to identify, also, that the differentiated vision of the psychologist must be used to provide greater support to teachers (guidance; exchanges; answering questions). This can be observed in the report by Jasmin, which presents the vision of the pedagogue-psychologist as complimentary, of mutual help:

“You see the thing is, the psychologist and the pedagogue have different views. So they end up providing the principal with support and, sometimes, guidelines on how to proceed, on how to identify some problem that sometimes we fail

to see. Thus, the eye of the psychologist is different from the eye of the pedagogue. But there is mutual help. And here I can see that it really happens in practice. And what really happens is that when we know that we will have our questions answered gives us confidence.” (Jasmin)

Rosa also points at the psychologist’s need to play an investigative role:

“The psychology professional must aim at root causes. So I believe they become like investigators. Psychologists must be investigators, in fact, of attitudes, of behavior, and of matters regarding how to deal with each other.” (Rosa)

The underlying meaning of these reports is that is the psychologist’s role is essential for the institution, be it as support for the team of teachers, be it as contributors of knowledge for the comprehension of the demands that appear in the school context, leading to balance in this context. This is in disagreement with the investigation by Pereira-Silva (2017), in which the comprehension that administrators and teachers have on school psychologists is that they are disposable professionals, whose services are only requested at difficult times.

However, in the reports by teachers in child education as well as in the elementary school, it is possible to observe that teachers do not yet recognize the role played by psychologists as someone to intervene also in the modification of the educational system, if necessary. The focus is still on students and their families. The intervention with teachers is considered primarily in order to provide the teacher with guidelines to work with children. That might be producing a reflection on the mistakes that are still made in the teachers’ comprehension of the role played by school psychologists, according to Giongo & Oliveira-Menegotto (2010). On the other hand, it is important to highlight that teachers and their practice are part of a preventive intervention by the school psychologist, which is the current practice model.

The Conception on psychologists

The separation of the topics in this category was designed with a consideration to the concept of ecological transition proposed by Bronfenbrenner regarding the alteration of the position of a person in the ecological environment due to a change in roles or of environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1979/1996). These transitions almost always change a person’s way of acting, thinking, and feeling. Therefore, different conceptions might be found because of ecological transitions, such as the conception of school psychology that is previous to the practice as teacher, that is, preceding the ecological transition of “becoming a pedagogue”. Another example would be the change of environments, understood as the move to the current teaching institution, as another ecological

transition resulting in different images regarding the teachers’ experiences working with psychologists in other institutions; and the current conception of school psychologist by the teachers.

According to the interviewed teachers, the conception on the school psychologist before working as teachers was that the psychologist was a professional to intervene as a last resort to solve problems; whose work got mixed with the administration work; as a professional who would only take action in case of disruptive behaviors; who would provide assistance to parents, not to the children; who students could go to if necessary, rather than the opposite. The respective reports by Rosa, Jasmin and Acácia illustrate that well:

“(…) we just went up to the psychologist when we needed. (…) But there were no activities that the psychologist conducted in the classroom and they never even asked us how we were doing.” (Rosa)

“(…) When the psychologist went to the school it was to provide the parents with support.” (Jasmin)

“(…) I used to believe that the psychologist was a professional that was there only to solve problems, and that sometimes even collaborated with the administration. (…) The psychologist only participated when child was taken out of the classroom and sent to the principal’s office, that was when the psychologist had a conversation with the child; when one of the children got really rebellious.” (Acácia)

How the teacher is associated the school psychologist with clinical practice and not to the pedagogical function in the classroom or as a professional who was trained to intervene with the other actors in the school as a whole, according to the principles of the current paradigm of school psychology. This is demonstrated by the reports of Dália and Azaleia, respectively:

“Even at school I used to believe that it was all about the clinical part, you see? I had not been able to make this connection with the pedagogical side of the psychology professional who was also able to work in the classroom.” (Dália)

“I never used to really connect the classroom with the psychologist’s work. It was like they were there only to fix indiscipline problems.” (Azaleia)

The description of the psychology professional as someone whose practice was of remedial character rather than preventive, and associated to the clinical practice and not a practice that focused on the classroom, makes sense because the ecological transition related to the “becoming-a-pedagogue” change in roles, and consequently, the closer connection with the classroom had not taken place yet. In other

words, it is understandable that this conception of the psychologist's work, before the ecological transition, is in agreement with the traditional model of practice for school psychologists, which was of remedial and clinical character.

Concerning their experiences at previous institutions, where they worked as teachers, the interviewees reported that the work of psychologists at the other institutions was focused mostly on children with diagnoses or on the solution of conflicts and indiscipline among the students. Two teachers reported that they previously worked at schools where there was no psychologist; one of them (Daisy), despite recognizing the absence of such professional, justifies the absence of the psychologist in the previous institution where she worked due to the fact that there were no children with disabilities:

"And the number of students with special needs was way smaller. Anyway we really felt the absence of a psychology professional because there were situations when you needed advice from a specialist and there was none. Normally, the coordination took care of those matters (...)". (Daisy)

Other teachers also reported that the work of the school psychologist at previous institutions was focused mostly on children with disabilities (With the diagnostic) and that there were interventions with the students that presented difficulties. Jasmin provides us with an example by referring to the support given by the psychologist: *"It was only for children who already had a diagnosis. Concerning the other children, we usually had to handle matters with the coordination professionals."* (Jasmin)

At the school where Rosa previously worked, the psychologist never went into the classroom and it was not at the school every day. Azaleia also reported the lack of closer support in the classroom. She thought the psychologist's practice was more focused on discipline matters among students or on the solution of more serious conflicts: *"we generally went to the psychologist for indiscipline cases, you see? (...) It was as if we were going to a doctor's office, you know? They did not use to go to the classroom to provide students with support."* (Azaleia)

Other teachers also reported that there was no psychological work focused on the classroom. The conversation with the students and the intervention with parents happened in accordance with the school requirements, as in the example provided by Acacia, in which she highlights the passive attitude of the psychologist: *"(...) It happened like this, the school requested the presence of parents (...) The psychologist would often talk with the student and invite parents to this intervention."* (Acácia)

Thus, the conception over school psychologists that

was previous to the pedagogue practice corroborates the vision of the old paradigm thought the school psychologist's practice that is based on normalizing practices and acritical clinical models to intervene at school. On the other hand, the current consumption over school psychologists, according to the teachers, is that they are professionals with a more active position at school, with a different way of looking at things and that focuses on all children, not only the children with disabilities, and also takes care of the professionals involved. This is pointed out by Margarida:

"(...) The psychologist is more active, there is no longer the practice of talking only with parents, they pay more attention to students now and to the team of professionals too, right? I believe psychologists are more focused and more active at school nowadays." (Margarida)

Another report shows this change in conception from a more passive to a more active posture by psychologists. According to Rosa:

"Nowadays it's different, the psychologist comes into the classroom. We still go to them but they come to us more often. So there is a change in this practice in which people go to the psychologists, now psychologists go to people." (Rosa)

This conception of the psychologist that is more present and accessible at school can be identified in the report by Íris: *"nowadays the school psychologist is more present, much more available to the whole school and to all professionals"* (Íris).

Jasmin also emphasizes the role of the psychologist as a partner for teachers and a bridge for families: *"Nowadays the school psychologist is a bridge, like, in the sense that they can work on the matter of perception in the classroom with the students and they can still mediate situations with the families."* (Jasmin)

Lily recognizes psychologists not only as mediators of conflicts but also as professionals with a more comprehending and humanized view on things, a professional that helps and can contribute by providing other perceptions: *"(...) I need someone with a different way of looking at things and that is able to help me find a new routes. I believe the psychologist is this person with a more comprehending view on things."* (Lily)

in addition, Daisy, Hortência and Acácia recognize the psychologist as a fundamental part of school, according to their reports, respectively:

"I would describe psychologists as essential professionals, based on the reality of our school." (Daisy) *"So, as an education professional, my opinion is that the psychologist is fundamental at learning institutions. I cannot conceive a school without a psychologist working with teachers, with families, and with the children."* (Hortência)

“The school psychologist is a fundamental part of institutions. They are a very important element and they are partners for teachers. I believe we wouldn’t be successful with students without their help.” (Acácia)

It is possible to observe similarities between the conceptions that the teachers had over school psychologists before they worked as pedagogues and their conception of psychologists at the other institutions where they worked. Both are completely contrary to the conception that they say they have nowadays over the school psychologist: it is a more comprehensive and coherer and conception in agreement with the preventive and relational approach that is expected from school psychologists nowadays. That suggests that the ecological transition in the sense of a change of roles (becoming a pedagogue), and it was not enough to generate this change in thought. In this case, it might have been the ecological transition in the sense of a change of environments that triggered the reports that denote a change in the comprehension of the role of psychologists. It is possible that the proximal processes might also be related to the occurrence of this change if we consider that such change is only possible when the new environment provides the constitution of proximal processes (such as the partnership between teachers and psychologists) and the ecological transition (meaning a change of environments) has great potential to promote this change of conception over psychologists.

The experience at school nowadays, you know which the psychologist has a regular space for interaction in the classroom, which is used in a collaborative way with the teachers, probably led to greater comprehension of their role by the teachers. It suggests that the reciprocity is present in these spaces that are shared by psychologists and teachers; and that there is a balance of power in the relations, the teachers do not feel submitted to the practice of psychologists, and the psychologist does not feel excluded from pedagogical processes. Thus, this new environment seems to provide proximal processes that operate towards the construction of a conception over psychology professionals in accordance with the new model of practice that is being promoted.

CONCLUSION

The results of the research point at a change in the teacher’s comprehension of the role played by psychologists. The discourse that corroborates the old paradigm for practice by psychologists at school (normalizing, excluding, of remedial character and associated to clinical practices) was found only in the reports referring to the old conceptions regarding the school psychologist.

In the perspective of the interviewed teachers, school psychologists nowadays are fundamental professionals at school; they make great contributions due to their different way of looking at things and there have specific knowledge; they not only work with the students and their families, they also work with the other professionals at school; And who is more present and accessible to the school as a whole. The research also highlights the partnership and the good relationship between teachers and psychologists; the change in conceptions from a passive posture to a more active posture by psychologists; the increasing comprehension up the possibilities for intervention by psychologists; and the preventive character of these interventions.

Thus, the interviewed teachers in this research demonstrate that they have a more comprehensive and coherent knowledge of the role played by the school psychologist concerning the preventive and relational approach that is nowadays expected in the practice of these professionals, and is in accordance with the new paradigm for practice by school psychologists. These results are different from the ones found in previous studies that were realized with teachers on the role played by psychologists, such is the case in the research works by Bastos and Pylro (2016) and Pereira-Silva et al. (2017), because in these studies there was greater coherence with the old paradigm for practice by school psychologists.

Finally, another relevant point in the research regards the ecological transitions and the proximal processes. The school where the research was realized, specifically speaking, is an environment that provided the constitutional proximal processes between features and psychologists, and that might have influenced the teacher’s comprehension of the role played by psychologists. It is possible that the fact that most of the teachers have going through specialization and that the researched institution provide psychology classes are factors that contributed to the proximal processes and ecological transitions and their influence in this capacity to promote changes in the teacher’s conceptions regarding psychologists. Maybe the further technical knowledge provided by a specialization course as well as the weekly experience with the school psychologist predisposed teachers towards openness to the experience of proximal processes and to the transformations related to ecological transitions.

In this aspect, more in-depth investigations and studies are necessary, particularly on the role played by proximal processes in their relations of the school psychologists with the other actors in the school context, including schools that do not provide “psychology classes”.

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