

SUPPORTS FOR THE SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST PERFORMANCE IN THE SCHOOL

Suportes Para A Atuação Em Fonoaudiologia Educacional

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■ SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY'S TRAJECTORY IN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT AND THE SUPPORT FOR ACTING IN THIS AREA

The Speech-Language Pathology is an applied science and, essentially, it's influenced by a great number of scientific areas, throughout its formation and, mainly, throughout its growth. That made it dynamic, because its expansion has conquered and still conquer different fields, following the scientific and technological advance, related to human communication. Among the greatest influences, the ones that are highlighted are: medicine, psychology, linguistics, odontology, physics, etc.

The dimension that this profession has taken, in the last years, is amazing. This growth has required positioning, with regard to these influences, because these are positions that help understand and act more effectively in communication changes. The clinical performance was, undoubtedly, the greatest responsible for the consolidation of Speech-Language Pathology. However, the growth of this profession exceeded the limits of the practice. Proof of this is the advance of Educational Speech-Language Pathology.

The school, place where Speech-Language Pathology arose, contributed a lot to the advance of Educational Speech-Language Pathology, also recognized as an area today. A lot has been discussed about these actions and school/educational speech-language pathologist's profile. There has finally been a consensus: subsidies for this activity must not be related to speech-language practice, because the school is an institution with its own and peculiar dynamics, responsible for mediating the process of knowledge construction.

Although language, especially writing, is the focus of this performance, the educational speech-language pathologist is faced with various problem situations at school, involving other areas knowledge, such as hearing, language, voice and orofacial motility. In addition, these professionals must deal with issues involving, fundamentally, school management aspects, for their acting planning cannot be disarticulated from the school's political and pedagogical project, to which they are trying to establish a connection.

Even in such situations, the definition of expertise areas, within the profession, was one of the factors that helped understanding these practices, although the requirement of specialization levels implies also the loss of interdisciplinary character of action. Speaking of requirements, in teaching and research scope, they also end up being relentless in relation to these specialization levels.

Within this context, it will be approached, from the point of view already exposed, the main support that allow the acting of educational speech-language pathologist to be discussed in this article. Therefore, this text has the main objective of indicating some concepts, including the health promotion and the knowledge construction, as essential for this acting.

The specialty in Educational Speech-Language Pathology was recently established and recognized by the Federal Board of Speech (CFFa)¹ and has, as its basis for action, the recommendations of Resolution No. 309, from 2005. In this resolution, it is observed that the aspects in health promotion assume a greater dimension, to the detriment of those preventives, although both have come from medicine. Accordingly, these advancements, originated from previous reflections on the concepts that should permeate the work of the speech-language pathologist in the school environment², contributed, and still contribute, to think of more consistent ways to act in school. These new acting should consider not only those speech-language pathology manifestation, but also particular issues from this community and the school, starting with their function.

The concept of health promotion is considered of great importance for this agreement. This concept is linked to the growth of health policies,

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which have broken off some aspects of preventive medicine, turning to a more comprehensive eye about human development. Within this context, it has allowed a greater advance of all public health actions. Promoting health, today, means providing ways for individuals to acquire health themselves, through resources of their own community³. On the other hand, the large dimension of this concept tells us that health is not something to be sought, as the satisfactory living conditions must be present for the entire community and not only in risk groups or "sick" groups.

That implies changes in social, environmental, cultural, and economic conditions, among others. That is, it is a look that integrates aspects of education and health, for better living conditions and sustainability of these acquired conditions³. This explains the increasing market share of health education, understood as essential educational processes to improve quality in people's lives, within their means and circumstances.

Another point to be detached is the function of the institution in which we are entering. The school's function is to primarily mediate and promote the construction of individuals' knowledge (learning). This concept is also fundamental to lead the work in that place. The learning process is another highlight in this discussion, namely the bases contribution in the developmental psychology to the work of the educational speech-language pathologist.

We highlight Developmental Psychology because it is concerned about the various aspects of the development process throughout the individual's life. Therefore, it is possible that this knowledge assists in the professionals' actions, according to specific phases of this process, interacting with the environment in which the individual is embedded and operates.

The learning process is connected to cognitive, sociocultural and social-familial elements, among others. We alert, therefore, to the fact that some of these aspects are also objects of Cognitive Psychology.

According to some authors⁴, the cognitive psychologist is concerned with studies of cognitive activities, namely: perception, memory, mental image, thinking, reasoning, and learning, among others. In general, these contents are conscious and considered as products of elaborations conducted by the individual, from information derived from their knowledge⁴. Therefore, this research, about how individuals acquire knowledge, rests on aspects of educational interest.

However, unlike developmental psychology, cognitive psychologists do not study the development of a phenomenon over a period in life, but

their constituent bases, as well as their influence on other elements of consciousness. Therefore, concerns about the development of a particular skill seem more comprehensive with respect to their understanding.

It is also important to note that, when talking about developing skills related to learning, it is necessary to report to two theorists who, undoubtedly, most influenced Education in recent decades: Piaget⁵ and Vygotsky⁶. It is worth mentioning that their theories did not refer to learning issues, but the constitution of thought and/or the construction of knowledge.

Piaget⁵, for using the clinical method in his investigations, greatly influenced Cognitive Psychology, although not all cognitive psychologists are Piagetian. His contribution to developmental psychology is even more undeniable. Remarkable, in his work, are the concepts of assimilation and accommodation. For Piaget⁵, the individual builds his knowledge through interaction with the environment. In this interaction, he is faced with new situations that make him act on this environment, building hypotheses, through the use of assimilation and accommodation processes. That makes it clear that they are not the Piagetian studies which contribute to understanding the learning difficulties or school failure, but the studies on the manner in which the child acquires knowledge.

Vygotsky⁶, on the other hand, adds in his assumptions the notion of "social" to the knowledge construction, giving the idea that there is a mediation between the individual's performance and the environment. This mediation would be provided by the sociocultural aspects. At the same time, this relation (individual, environment, sociocultural aspects) is not linear. It is dialectics, i.e., there is interdependence between these considered aspects, which are what further the comprehension of the whole relation. In these assumptions, Vygotsky⁶ emphasized, though, the role of language in the constitution of higher mental functions. For him, language, besides being fundamental in communication, provides support for organization and knowledge structuring. Again, there is an emphasis with regard to cognitive functions.

Regarding more specific contributions to education, Vygotsky⁶ also indicated the notion that good teaching is one that comes forward to development. To this notion is linked the concept of Proximal Development Zone (ZPD), which is the distance between the skills that the student can perform alone and those that he could only do with the help of a mediator (a more experienced individual).

These assumptions helped, and still help, a lot the relations in inclusive school contexts. In these

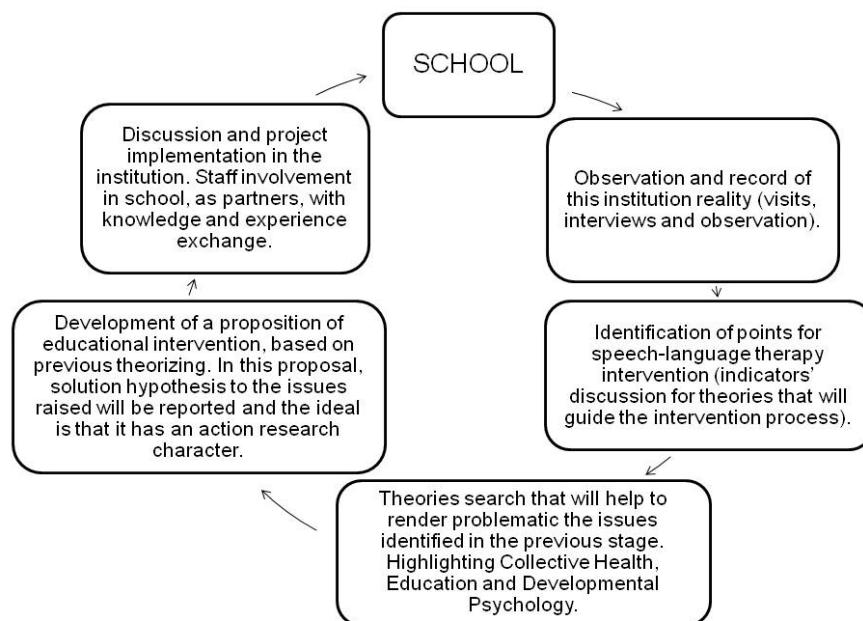
concepts of development zones are implicit the interaction appreciation among different students, demystifying the idea of group homogenization⁷. In situations of heterogeneous interactions, everyone benefits, for more experienced students have to redesign, all the time, their contributions when they assist less experienced students in tasks that they can complete only with the help of those. In these interactions, another object that is the one that mostly produces problem situations in the educational context will be considered: language. Both oral and written language are often present in the school scenario. About that, again, it is possible to refer to the influences for the work with this object. Both Development Psychology and Linguistics will be present in that moment. The contributions of these areas will be to understand the factors that interfere in the acquisition process and the development of these skills and discuss issues about language concepts, Portuguese teaching, sociolinguistic variation, textual genres, uses and functions of language.

Finally, we cannot forget that education involves public policies. Therefore, understanding these

policies will be crucial for understanding school dynamics.

After this brief statement about fundamental concepts in this paper, it is possible to venture the suggestion of a way to work through these issues. It is a method adopted in curricular stage, turned to the Educational Speech-Language Pathology area, whose dynamic was described in a previous study⁸. In this study, important points of this action have been highlighted⁸. One of these points was the option of using the methodology of questioning. This methodology is translated into a teaching model based on a renewed or progressive education⁹ and has been proved to be a suitable alternative for courses that focus on the provision of services to community.

This methodology has been consolidated through the “arc method”, by Charles Maguerez, represented by Pereira¹⁰. In this arc scheme, five steps are represented: observation of reality; key point; theorizing; solution hypothesis; and application to reality⁹. Adapting the scheme proposed by the authors in relation to actions taken by the Speech-Language Pathology at school, the following cycle might be supposed.



Picture 1 – Suggested scheme of the speech-language pathologist’s acting in school, based on the steps of the teaching-learning process with the Pedagogy of Questioning

In this cycle we highlight the importance of the Speech-Language Pathologist’s posture in schools. This posture should convey availability combined with interdisciplinary aspects, according to structure

and routine found at school. It is important to remember that this institution has its own dynamics and the school staff must be involved in any changes that may occur in this dynamic.

■ CONCLUSION

It is observed that the influences of concepts from other sciences are increasingly present in a speech-language pathologist's performance. In Educational Speech-Language Pathology, it is not different. However, studies and researches on these areas become fundamental to efficient and coherent professional practice, with the institutional reality which this professional may encounter.

Knowledge of theoretical assumptions related to the process of school learning, connected to child development, is of great importance for this performance. With regard to the concept of health promotion, they are also extremely important for understanding health aspects of the community with which we are dealing. Therefore, understanding Education and their policies will be crucial for understanding school dynamics.

The methodology of questioning allows the school knowledge and the proposition of interventions that are consistent with this reality.

Thus, the speech-language pathologist who intends to work satisfactorily in a school needs to consider the role of sociocultural contexts, in which individuals are embedded and operate, adopting assumptions not only psychological, but also the contributions of other theories, such as the socio-political ones.

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