

MATURITY ISSUES AND SCHOOL DEBUT

Zada BADARNE

Moldova State University

This article emphasizes the importance of maturity to learning in elementary school in its broad sense including social, emotional and cognitive skills and abilities as the base of the child's success in school.

Keywords: maturity, elementary school, child.

PROBLEMA MATURITĂȚII ȘI DEBUTUL ȘCOLAR

În articol este evidențiată importanța maturității în învățarea în școala elementară dintr-o perspectivă extinsă, care include deprinderile și abilitățile sociale, emoționale și cognitive ca bază a succesului școlar.

Cuvinte-cheie: maturitate, școală primară, copil.

The term maturity¹ is presented in the research literature as a term that received many definitions and multi-dimensional meaning. Many research studies view and present maturity as the amount of interaction, balance and harmony between a person and his environment, whereas in some definitions it is a meaning of a system of behavioral patterns required for the adaptation of the individual to his social environment requirements, changes and challenges, with the purpose of survival of the individual in the physical and social environment.

Whereas out of some definitions a meaning of progress is obtained, and especially study progress, such as the ability of children to manage their emotions and control their behavior and relationships to achieve study progress [6]. In other definitions there is a view of ability that includes social, study and emotional ability as an important condition for readiness, thus readiness is determined according to the children's ability to include a set of skills and abilities to control their emotions and behavior in order to achieve social, emotional and study adaptation.

In many research studies that used the technique of examining educators' attitudes regarding readiness, it was stated that study readiness is a complex of skills and a tool box of a specific study skills and knowledge required for study, such as counting, recognition of colors, letters, etc. A tool box of study skills makes it easier for the child in school, which is considered from the teachers' point of view as a vital and important thing for the adaptation of children to study [3]. Amongst other things, the tool box includes social and emotional skills as an inseparable part of the complex of child's skills, such as the ability to control behavior, independence, and ability to cooperate in class with children and adults, ability to concentrate and listen. These abilities are considered vital and needed and they predict adaptation to school.

The components of maturity: In recent years the term readiness expanded beyond the child's readiness from the study standpoint, learning achievements like reading and mathematical skills, towards a broader meaning that includes physical health, social and emotional adaptation, a certain level of language and general knowledge, although many researchers have added physical health as more important, that is critical and relevant to the school beginning. In this sense study readiness is more than achieving study targets; it is also a social, emotional and health development.

The broadening of the term in recent years is around focusing on emotional- social components as a vital part of adaptation of children to school. Social and emotional Inability hurts the children's adaptation to school.

- **Social/emotional adaptation**

When admitting to school, social changes are significant and affect the child's adaptation nature; it has a direct influence on personality and the formation of positive attitudes toward school, although sometimes the view of social maturity is a developmental view the child can acquire a maturity level only when he has developmental maturity.

¹ The terms maturity for school, readiness, adjustment are given in the research literature as identical terms for adaptation and capability for school. Occasionally, the terms "readiness" and "maturity" are given as predictors of a higher level of adaptation.

Children need a certain level of social skills before they enter school in order to ensure their social development in the earlier stages. Due to the importance assigned to social adaptation of the child in his process of development as something that predicts adaptation for school especially in the first years, the viewpoint that the child needs to acquire a certain level of maturity and social skills before admitting to school. The child is ready for school when he is equipped with a complex of relevant social skills.

A list of social characteristics, or a basis of social characteristics or social skills was compiled in many research studies in the research literature, which would serve as the child's guide for his relationships with others, adults or children in school or in class such as independence and non-overdependence upon others.

- **Ability to manage without mother or parents** because lack of independence and over-dependence upon parents or difficulty in separation from the parents is hindering and hurts the children's adaptation.

- **A positive attitude and ability** to initiate and develop relationships with others, being cooperative and not inclined to loneliness, having positive attitudes towards others, expression of negative emotions without aggression or hurting himself or others, showing of interest, sense of being part of a group, sense of belonging, being responsive to the group, having friends and ability to initiate contacts.

- **Self-esteem** which is an ability to adapt with the complex of social changes a child faces self-esteem and self-conceptualization that includes communication ability and study and physical ability. A low self-esteem and lack of initiative and independence lead to difficulties in adaptation, failure and inability to communicate with others lead to negative attitudes towards school.

In the social adaptation process teachers bear utmost importance as vital players. In this period the child is exposed to social changes and the teacher is the main figure that plays an important role in the molding of the social identity, changes that are significant to personality development according to the teacher's relation and evaluation, a child's status is determined and redesigned. Self-esteem and the appreciation of others are built according to an evaluation of the teacher. Accentuation on the teachers' behavior plays a role in the designing of system of social relations, that are the child's positive perception of social experience; they comprise a source that mediates in the construction of relations between children, in their ability to create a network, a group routine and a dynamic of a supportive social group. Additionally, the school itself has an importance of nurturing values and social pragmatism that meets the needs according to the development speed of children, to believe in the importance of evaluation of students, understanding them and their needs. School is instrumental in creating an educational climate of mutual respect and appreciation. Naturally not all children react in the same way, there are those who are more sensitive to social experiences and those who are less sensitive. The way children are exposed to the environment is more important and the mediating person between a child and the environment is a significant factor by being a source of trust and security, that is vital for the forward development of the child both socially and emotionally and gives space for a social experience that ensures trust, security and motivation for learning.

There is also a need for assistance in constructing a relationship not only between the child and the institution but also between the children together. Children need friendship, it gives them security and a sense of belonging.

- **Ability to sit still and concentrate** the list goes on and includes the ability to sit still and concentrate. The importance of control of sitting and ability to listen in class with the list of social skills, researchers have expressed a concern regarding it as sometimes the child faces difficult situations or a difficult period that influence the mood and then there is a chance that a child is stuck with a social label that hurts his image. Many children that have struggled with personal and social skills had more difficulties in the first grade and educators report on lack of confidence and the children being less active than they were in kindergarten [1].

- **Cognitive learning adaptation**

Researchers warn about the problematical ness of the term in the definition of academic readiness while other elements of social or emotional aspect are as important, and hurting these aspects may hurt the quality of performance in kindergartens and are a source of distraction to the personal needs of every child. There is a danger that overstressing the study program and achievements makes the kindergarten study and achievements oriented and turns it into a part of school. School programs get a powerful position which pushes aside kindergarten programs and thus lowers the value of kindergarten with all its implications on the socio-emotional aspect regarding curriculum orientation. This matter of investing in the idea of school readiness from the aspect of study hurts the quality of pre-school programs [2].

Cognitive and intellectual learning adaptation is something the teachers point at as the most influential factor, including curiosity and study motivation. Children with curiosity and motivation will adapt faster in school environment and it will be easier for them and will integrate faster in the school environment. With focus and highlight the important of increase the value of ability or social and emotional adaptation.

List of categories for academic, emotion and social maturity [5].

Academic Maturity

1. perception
2. interest
3. concentration
4. ambition
5. perseverance
6. self-confidence

Emotional maturity

1. discipline
2. external appearance
3. honesty
4. mental balance
5. mood
6. accepted by the teacher

Social Maturity

1. aggressiveness
2. social ability
3. leadership
4. energy and activity
5. independence
6. scapegoat

• **Indicators for adjustment**

- ✓ Individual, biological and psychological aspect together with capabilities and skills, the child is ready for learning when he is equipped with essential skills for learning.
- ✓ The environment and the quality of interaction and mediation at school with the educators as meaningful figures for the children.
- ✓ The age of entering school has a direct and critical influence on learning. The month of birth is an indicator and predicts the level of academic results, and may determine the status of children at school.

Conclusion

We have seen that there is no agreement about who is responsible for the issue of maturity. The literature presents many variables which influence readiness, and each one of them can influence it, but with a different strength, and each variable can be different in different groups, communities, schools, locations and families. There are disagreements about the factors that influence and predict adjustment and readiness to school. There are approaches claiming that biological maturity is the predictor versus other approaches that say that acquired skills, knowledge and environment conditions are more influential in creating readiness. In addition there are also approaches that integrate biological maturity with learning and experiencing as predicting readiness and adjustment.

Bibliography:

1. BRONMSTROM, S. Problems and Barriers in Children's Learning When They Transit from Kindergarten to Kindergarten Class in School. In: *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal Themed Monograph Series*, 2003, no.1, p.51-66.
2. DOCKETT, S. & PERRY, B. Starting School: A Community Endeavor. In: *Childhood Education*, 2008, no.5, p.274.
3. GILL, S. WINTERS, D. & FRIEDMAN, D.S. Educators' Views of Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Readiness and Transition Practices. In: *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 2006, no.3, p.213-227.
4. RAJU, M.V.R. & KHAJA, T. RAHAMTULLA. Adjustment Problems among School Students. In: *Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology*, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam January, 2007, vol.33, no.1, p.73-79.
5. SMILANSKY and SHFATIA, A. *Scale of valuation and adjustment*. Jerusalem: Szold institute, 2002.
6. WEBSTER-STRATTON, C. & REID, M.J. Strengthening Social and Emotional Competence in Young Children – the Foundation for Early School Readiness and Success: Incredible Years Classroom Social Skills and Problem-Solving Curriculum. In: *Infants & Young Children*, 2004, vol.17, no.2, p.96-113.

Prezentat la 06.06.2013