



# The Good Teacher of High School in the Representation of the Students Body

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## Abstract

The present study aims to analyze the representations about the good teacher in the eyes of the students of the third grade of High School. The empirical material was obtained through a semi-structured interview and questionnaire, with forty-nine students of the 3rd year of high school, from two public schools located in the interior of the State of Minas Gerais, Brazil. The research carried out is of a qualitative approach, using the concept of social representation. The evaluations of the representations referring to what the students consider as “good teacher” allowed to identify attributes related to the personal attitude of the teacher, as well as their pedagogical action, that is, what was called attributes of the scope of the BE and the DOING of the teacher. It was verified that in the opinion of the students, the good teacher is the one who has mastery of contents of the taught discipline and good didactics, as well as accomplishes his teaching task through a good relationship with the students. The research contributed to highlight the importance of establishing adequate interpersonal relationships in the constitution of the representation that the students have regarding a “Good Teacher”. This finding has implications for the training of high school teachers.

## Subject Areas

Education

## Keywords

Good Teacher, Teacher Training, High School

## 1. Introduction

After all, what is a good teacher in high school? This study stems from the unrest triggered by the questioning about the success of the high school teacher.

As a psycho-pedagogue in a high school, I started questioning about a successful teacher, listening to comments from students and parents. Considering the need to think of teaching practice as one of the factors to motivate high school students, I decided to start with an exploratory research that gave voice to the main protagonist in the school process: the student. The research started from the questions: Who is a good teacher in the view of students in high school? What are its characteristics? What is the student's representation of a good teacher? Therefore, the objective of this research is to analyze the representations about the good teacher in the point of view of the students of the third grade of High School, that is, the criteria that allow to constitute a set of attributes of what they consider a good teacher.

Concerning specifically the concept related to the "Good Teacher" [1], it clarifies that there is no single explanation, however, he affirms that there are expectations on the part of teachers and students about the performance that each one must have within the institution, in the everyday classroom.

The above-mentioned author states that the classroom is the place where the "pedagogical school act" is privileged [1]. In this environment come the contradictions of the social context, scientific questions and the value conceptions of the subjects that make up the pedagogic act, being highly necessary to study what happens in this space and why to happen, attribution of those who commit to the education of teachers and with a competent pedagogical practice.

The author points out that the characteristics pointed out to the good teachers from the perspective of the student do not indicate as good teachers the so-called "good ones". They value the characteristics and add the adjective "demanding" in the sense of collecting participation and tasks. From this, it is observed that the student's choice of "Good Teacher" is permeated by his social practice, that is, the result of his appropriation of practice and social-historical knowledge.

The appropriation is a reciprocal action between the different subjects and the different scopes or social integrations. But they are different in the subjects, that is, they make different appropriations according to their interests, values, beliefs, experiences, etc. This is demonstrated by the differentiation between the behavior of students when they propose the "Good Teacher" [1].

According to Barbosa (2016) [2], in the research on good teachers of final years of elementary education, students chose options as a patient teacher, who likes students, with content mastery, concern with their learning, impartiality in treatment), demand for students, innovation and humor.

According to Bühler (2010) [3], the students of this research mentioned aspects related to affection, firmness and theoretical knowledge. It is seen in this research that although in the initial years of elementary education, students recognize these characteristics to qualify those who consider them good teachers.

Faced with the restlessness, the theme of the present investigation was constituted with the intention of seeking, in the contact with the students, the representation of the good teacher of High School: its dimensions and significations.

Research on the "good teacher" leads us to the following questions: who is the

good teacher from the point of view of the students? What is the student's representation of a good teacher? What aspects are considered by students in conceptualizing it? What is the criterion for choosing successful teachers?

There is no doubt that the students' representations are constructed in the daily school life, about the pedagogical practice of the teacher and present themselves as manifestations of a historical-social totality, in which the student and the teacher are inserted. With this north, we sought to know the social representations that the student has of this teacher.

The option for the public network in this research was due, in principle, to the fact that it brings together the largest number of students in relation to the private network and the social relevance of this level of education for the population.

From the reflection on the attributes required of a good teacher to act in High School, open the possible ways of analyzing this level of education and possibilities for educational transformations. We sought to reconstruct the educational memory of students, elements that require teachers to reflect on pedagogical practices. We also consider that the investigation of attributes of the good teacher can provide subsidies, to rethink relevant aspects of teaching practice to be contemplated in teacher training.

## 2. Materials and Methods

The construction of social representations on the attributes of a good high school teacher is intertwined with the pedagogical practice of teachers. It builds itself into the actual action of the teacher in the classroom. The general objective of this study is to analyze the representations about the good teacher in the students' eyes of the third grade of High School, that is, the criteria that allow to constitute a set of attributes of what they consider a good teacher.

The need to seek from the students the representations about the good teacher pointed to the qualitative analysis, allowing interpreting the world, analyzing the place and the subject in their social and cultural interactions, bringing the researcher closer to the social actors, so that the particular issues in each context can be present in the studies of society. In this way, there is an appreciation of everyday school life and an emphasis on education as a social, cultural and historical process, given its complexity and different contexts.

In opting for such an approach, the researcher must be clear about the objectives, although in this approach it is admitted that "there is no single and exclusive form of interpretation of the real" [4], requiring the researcher to argue answer your questions.

Bogdan and Biklen's [5] reflections greatly aided in the task of reviewing the methodological aspects of this type of research. They clarify that "qualitative or naturalistic research involves the obtaining of descriptive data, obtained in the direct contact of the researcher with the situation studied, processes than the product, and is concerned with portraying the participants' perspective" [6].

The image of this universe, specifically the good teacher, is articulated to a set of beliefs, values and images that condense the meanings, the system of reference that allows interpreting the representations of the good teacher of High School.

It is in the context outside the classroom that the pedagogical practices happen and are represented by the students, when they refer to the good teacher. Through the students "statements, we believe that important information about the teachers" performance in the classroom, about the "tactics" and "strategies" that the good teacher uses in his pedagogical work, as Certeau (2014) [7], the everyday is invented with a thousand ways of hunting unauthorized.

The description of educational processes that take place inside the classroom by the students, subsidized the researcher in the direction of the constitution of criteria necessary to be a "Good Teacher". The investigation of the classroom always occurs in a context permeated by a multiplicity of meanings that, in turn, is part of the cultural universe that must be studied by the researcher. Therefore, the criteria will always be unfinished. Based on Geersapud Spink (2012) [8], when working with the representations, it is not possible to catalog the criteria for the stable and consensual because they are essentially heterogeneous.

The research adopted the theoretical reference of the Social Representation, coming from Social Psychology, focusing on the social representation based on Moscovici (1978) [9], directed to the discussions of the good teacher in the student representations. It is believed that both the teacher and the student are social subjects, enrolled in a defined social and cultural situation, having a personal and social history.

In discussing social representation, the author has shown that it, as a phenomenon, means a modality of knowledge, specific expression of a social thought that stems from social relations established among men. Social representation is defined as a mental activity of reorganization and re-creation of the real by the subjects, because it is not only the reflection of external reality in the individual, but a mental construction of the object that is not separated from the symbolic activity of the subject.

Therefore, in the social representation on a social object is reproduced and reconstructed from the interaction of the subject with the direct objects and situations. Thus, the social representation of the good teacher is a construction of the student, it is not the person of the teacher, but it is something produced in the relationship with the students.

According to Moscovici (1978) [9], the student represents a "Good Teacher", it is a re-presentation, already filtered through a worldview and ideology, which are products of the social group to which the individual belongs.

Fieldwork was carried out in two public schools named Schools A and B. The criterion of inclusion of the schools was the availability of the same to participate in the research.

The subjects of the present research were forty-nine students of the third grade of the high school, of the morning, of both sexes, in the age group 17 to 20 years, belonging to School A and B. They answered the questionnaire forty-nine

students and five were interviewed. The choice of subjects was random, as inclusion criterion should be in the third year of high school and willingness to participate.

In order to carry out the research based on the bibliography about it and on the very qualitative nature of the investigation, the questionnaire and the interview were used as instruments of data collection.

The objective of the questionnaire was to gather opinions with the students, to verify which of their teachers are considered good and to which they attribute this conception.

Completion occurred in a descriptive and optional manner on the part of the students, not being requested identification of the students, thus allowing anonymity. Thus, after the application of the questionnaire, with the aim of “apprehending their world view, that is, the meaning they attribute to the reality that surrounds them and their own actions” (Ludke & André, 2013, p. 26) [6], the contents of the responses were read and analyzed.

Complementing the data obtained through the questionnaires, interviews were carried out. The choice of the interview was based on the intention of seeking in the student’s speech the value system, the dimensions of the representations and the image that the student possesses of the good teacher of the public school.

The semi-structured interview was chosen, seeking to give more freedom to students’ reports. According to Cunha (1996, p. 54) [1], Michelat emphasizes that the importance of this type of interview lies in “(...) facilitating the production of strongly charged meanings of affectivity, even when presented as stereotype: what was sought bringing to light, in fact, is the logic underlying the associations that, from initial instruction, will lead the interviewee to address such or that theme, to go back or to progress to other topics.”

Seeking consistency between the qualitative approach and the most appropriate way of analyzing the representations of the students, regarding the attributes of the good teacher of High School, the technique of content analysis was sought to understand and to infer new knowledge, from the reports of the interviews and questionnaires.

By following the path taken by content analysis, we detect the development of an instrument for analyzing communications. Bardin (2011, p. 9) [10] states that “Content analysis is a set of increasingly sophisticated methodological tools that are constantly being refined and applied to extremely diverse discourses (content and continents).”

### 3. Results and Discussions

The treatment of the data performed in this study was based on the assumptions of discourse analysis. Its use allowed the description of the manifest content of oral or written communications, both in the questionnaire and in the interview. What is important is to understand the meaning of the student’s representations.

In this part of the work, we return the representations of the students, from

their answers to the questionnaire, as well as the individual interview. We had the concern of not losing sight of, at this moment of description and analysis, the fundamental points that motivated this work: the analysis of the attributes that should meet the good teacher of High School, in the representation of the student.

Thus, after readings and re-readings of the representations described in the questionnaires, the correction of biases, the horizontal reading of the students' speeches, some essential generalities, constructed in the process of content analysis, were listed. The analysis indicated that there were in the social representation of the students about the good teacher, two thematic axes that most emphasized, one is that which refers to the person of the teacher, that is, his personal characteristics, denominated as the being of the teacher and the other about the institutional role of the teacher, his pedagogical actions, the teacher's doing.

As a BE of the good teacher, aspects inherent to the person of the teacher, referring to the personal qualities, referring to the subject personal attributes were highlighted. How to do the good teacher, attributes inherent to the teacher's role were defined, referring to the pedagogical practice, to the performance, to the good teacher's action, aspects referring to the scope of the theme pedagogical actions.

With regard to the personal attributes of the teacher, the most emphasized aspects were: being a friend, good relationship with the students, affective, concern for the future of the student, responsible, demanding, honest, sincere, cheerful, good-humored, compressible and others (**Table 1**).

Regarding the institutional role, their pedagogical actions, the students consider that the good teacher is one who prepares his classes, experience, focuses on the content that the student needs to learn, mastery of content, good didactics, likes the profession, has good relationship with the student and others (**Table 2**).

**Table 1.** Percentage of the personal attributes of the good teacher.

Features	(%)
Friend	83
Good relationship with students	100
Affective	79
Concern about the future of the student	98
Responsible	71
Demanding	89
Honest	73
Sincere	69
joyful	86
Has a good mood	91
Understandable	80
Others	48

Source: Author data.

**Table 2.** Percentage of pedagogical attributes of the good teacher.

Features	(%)
Prepare your classes	93
Experience	100
Focus on content	78
Content domain	98
Good didactic	99
Likes the profession	100
Sun	79
Others	38

Source: Author data.

Therefore, the analysis of the contents of the questionnaires of the High School student revealed the themes: Personal Attributes and Pedagogical Actions as recurrent attributes of a good teacher.

It is possible to observe that in the representations, the students prioritize, in the description of the good teacher, an identification by the pedagogical action, that is, they refer to the qualities necessary for the good performance of the pedagogical action. All the personal attributes, designated by the students, as characteristics of a good teacher occur in a given pedagogical context.

In the interviews the image of teachers is determined by the pedagogical practice of daily life. The student representation statements related to the teacher's performance indicate what he should do to teach well and the student to learn.

The students' representations reveal that good teachers are committed to teaching, indicate a look marked by a controlling content of the institutional role of the teacher—teacher is the one who teaches. In this direction, the act of teaching seems to be the determining point in the construction of representations about the good teacher.

In the same direction, the conceptions about good teachers present in Cunha's research (1996, p. 72) [1], showed that: "For the current students, the Good Teacher is the one who dominates the content, chooses appropriate ways to present the content and has good relationship with the group."

This commitment is the most visible face of the representations that high school students have of the role of the teacher. According to Freire (2008, p. 20) [11], "teaching does not exist without learning and vice versa", but in students' reports it is taught to transfer knowledge, in a relation of reception and not of construction of knowledge. It does not take a more accurate analysis to infer that these socially shared aspects of the students emanate from the traditional model of education.

In the students' reports, the concept of the good teacher is represented by his/her action in the classroom everyday, by the pedagogical practice, such as: teaching very well, having the student learn, evidenced by personal attributes, he

must be understanding. It is the everyday of the classroom, by the being and the action of the teacher, that will emerge the representations of the students about their attributes.

The representations that the students have of their teachers reveal some aspects that are determinant in the practice developed in the classroom. However, it is worth remembering, as already mentioned, that this construction is located in the historical-school context, where the expectations that society has previously established, often interfere in a decisive way in the students' representation.

Such representations of the teacher are, as it is understood, expressions or manifestations of a set of ideas and values, shared meanings that constitute a culture proper to the school.

Understanding that the school culture does not exist independently, and that it is constituted from the broader social relations, it is possible to discuss the representations of the actions and personal attributes of the good teacher are constructed and reconstructed in the daily life of the school, for actions.

The great influence that the teacher exerts on the students is clearly known, being aware of the responsibility in their practice as a teacher. Freire (2008) [11] affirms that teaching is a human specificity and reaffirms that for education to take place are necessary: professional competence, generosity, commitment to the profession and to self, autonomy to act, speak, listen, be listened, keep in mind that education is ideological and, not least, be passionate about the profession and people.

The image of a friendly teacher is present in the speech of most students when they refer to good teachers. The establishment of a friendly and affective relationship between students and teachers, influences the performance of students and would generate the possibility of effective teaching-learning process.

We observe that a successful task of teaching, in the representation of the students requires, besides the knowledge, a certain charisma, friendship, to arouse the interest of the student. Facing this, according to Freire (2008, p. 161) [11], it is the teacher's duty not to be afraid to express affectivity, therefore: "to stimulate and develop in us the taste of wanting well and enjoying joy without which the educational practice loses its meaning".

To make the pedagogical action relaxed, something interesting, arouses the interest of the student. Thus, the classroom is not relaxed a priori; one way to make it interesting would be to use strategies of some playful activities in the classroom. However, only the teacher with a sense of humor, humorous, cheerful is able to be creative for these activities.

Freire (2008, p. 80) [11] points out that "teaching requires joy and hope". Hope to learn and teach, as the author analyzes.

According to the students interviewed, good teachers are technically insightful, innovative. They are sensitive to student demonstrations, doing responsible work and have mastery of content. Students reinforce that they need teachers who listen to them and value them. The efficacy of teachers is in the possibil-



ity of dominating their impulses or their hostility towards certain students' attitudes.

A large number of reports highlight the institutional role of the teacher as the one who teaches, goes through the content domain and teaching methodology. The students value in the teacher qualities such as: someone who teaches well, is aware that his role is to teach, explains the subject well, knows how to convey the contents, takes the student's doubts, knows the content, delves into the matter.

From this perspective, Pimentel's work (2003, p. 85) [12], in addition to corroborating our analysis of the attributes of the good teacher, emphasizes the importance of the content domain, in the representation of the students on the teachers of Higher Education. In the author's research, all teachers pointed to as a good teacher: "have the mastery of a broad, deep and up-to-date knowledge, not only of the program content, but also of the science they teach. They also have the knowledge of related sciences."

In the content of students speeches, the ability to reinvent strategies is connoted as a good teacher's quality, proposing more innovative methodologies to convey the content of the subject such as: make some jokes, jokes and drawings to explain, more dynamic classes, promoting debates, your class we participate, it is not decorative.

It is also necessary to recognize that in the representations of the good teacher, students make clear the need to follow the content taught, not to curl up, to get lost in the explanations and to prepare their classes. The sequence of the pedagogical activities, in the representation of the students, aims at the organization of the learning work of the students and comes from the need to facilitate the transmission and acquisition of knowledge.

Another clipping of the pedagogical action in the representation of the students in the interview is the question of the Teacher-Student Relationship. In this sense, the establishment of a positive relation is understood, in the representations of the students, as an essential condition for teaching and learning to occur. The relationship goes through affective interaction and a content of pedagogical action that is clearly moralizing, imposing rules and disciplining.

It is noted in the intersection of the students' representations the need for a limit on the part of the teacher. These accounts show another view: that student-teacher relationships are not centered on friendship, gentleness, and humor, but also on demand and rigidity. In this context, students define as good teachers those who know how to deal with balance and common sense, with the limits of power. However, we note that some students give the good teacher a directive condition of authority and rigidity.

Considering that the question of the relation with the students assumes a special characteristic, it seemed to us to be often hierarchical, reproducing a relation of power of the teacher who still is the controller of these relations. According to Bohoslavsky (2010) [13], in the classroom is the teacher who controls the situation and ends up reproducing the power structure to which it is submitted. Thus, the greatest force in the relationship between teachers and students is not

only the reflection on them, but especially in the way in which the involvement between teachers and students is established.

In this sense, it can be admitted that the good teacher in the representation of the students, requires a more rigorous posture, facilitating the mastery of the classroom. However, they are emphatic in expressing the need for empathy and reciprocity, the need to be close to the student. Thus, good relationships allow the learning process to develop in a pleasant and harmonious way, even with the rigor of the teacher.

On the other hand, discipline control is favored by the friendly relationship that the teacher establishes with the students. However, they are unanimous in stating that the indiscipline, the classroom mess impede the organization of the classroom. Thus, the disciplinary rite favors the organization of the classroom and the teaching-learning process. According to Moysés (2012, p. 73) [14], an “intellectual work requires a minimum of order to be profitable.”

It is worth emphasizing that intrinsically linked to personal attributes are the pedagogical actions developed by the good teacher. The pedagogical actions of the good teacher are guided by the personal attributes of this teacher. To whom, then, reference a good teacher?

Certainly, no longer the one who proves only its effectiveness by the domain of didactics and content. This may have instrumental skills, dominate content, be concerned with transmission, maintain discipline, but may be myopic in regard to teacher-student relationship and personal attributes.

Therefore, personal qualities, while the teacher’s BEING make a difference in the analysis of the “Good Teacher”, it is not enough to know how to do, according to research reports.

#### 4. Conclusions

The objective of the present study was to survey the social representations of the good teacher by the high school students of a public school in Minas Gerais, Brazil. Given the recognized importance of the role played by the teacher and the challenges in the daily life of the classroom, it is justified the consideration of the good teacher as the target of social representations.

The present categories allow us to identify two distinct sets of characteristics attributed to the good teacher. Considering the frequency of the presented characteristics, first are the aspects directly related to the personal characteristics of the teacher, determined in the teacher’s SER axis. With regard to pedagogical practices, pedagogical actions were grouped in the axis, pedagogical to DO.

The literature review and the results of the empirical search indicated that the good teacher should reveal in his teaching practice his commitment to BEING and DOING in school every day, that is, personal attributes and attributes related to pedagogical actions.

In this particularity his DO, which is not independent of his BEING, manifests in the space of pedagogical action, where the good teacher seeks to occupy him

effectively, with competence and commitment.

In the set of characteristics referring to the Being of the teacher, it refers to aspects that refer more to the teacher as an individual that relates to the students, having therefore emphasized the person of the teacher and not to their professional performance. Such categories were highlighted having good personal relationships with students, caring about the future of the student and having good humor. These aspects deserve attention on the part of professionals focused on teacher education.

According to the characteristics referring to Pedagogical Doing, it is more concerned with the pedagogical actions in the daily routine of the classroom, that is, emphasis on the students' view of the teacher's practice. Such categories were emphasized like the profession, pedagogical experience, good didactics to teach and mastery of content. One characteristic that attracted a lot of attention was to like the profession; it deserves our reflection.

The results of this research are in addition to the results of other researches carried out on the good teacher and successful pedagogical practices that, although they use other methodologies and different levels of teaching, show similar dimensions of the studied problem.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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