


## COOPERATIVE GAMES AND THE QUALITY OF SOCIAL INTERACTIONS IN THE CLASSROOM: CONTRIBUTIONS OF CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

 <https://doi.org/10.56238/arev7n4-260>

Submitted on: 03/25/2025

Publication date: 04/25/2025

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### ABSTRACT

This theoretical article analyzes the use of cooperative play and games for the development of prosocial values and actions in the interactions between teachers and students in basic education. Based on the literature, and from the perspective of Cultural Psychology, it investigates the potential of cooperative games associated with the cultivation of dialogical relationships in the classroom, to promote both more efficient teaching-learning processes and the ethical-moral development of students. It indicates that playful and cooperative pedagogical practices are capable of enhancing the development of relationships of trust, autonomy and pro-sociability of students and teachers, generating actions of solidarity, cooperation and empathy. Thus, transformations in the dynamics of classrooms contribute to fairer and more democratic societies, based on ethical and cooperative values.

**Keywords:** Cooperation. Teacher-student interaction. Gaming. Prosocial. Cultural Psychology.

## INTRODUCTION

The development and education of children deserve the social interest of any society. Throughout the twentieth century and the last decades, the contributions of psychology have been appropriated in different ways by different societies and, not surprisingly, it is the historical-cultural niche that children occupy in a given country (cultural context) that guides the implementation of educational policies and programs aimed at children. Considering that the success of any intervention in the sphere of institutional education will always depend on the quality of teacher-student relationships, it is necessary to reflect on this relationship in order to achieve the integral development of students. Unfortunately, in most school contexts, teachers are more concerned with promoting the cognitive development of students, leaving aside the other dimensions of human development, specifically their socio-affective development and social values (BRANCO, 2023).

Therefore, it is essential that in the teaching-learning process to be promoted in the classroom, teachers seriously consider the ethical-moral aspects of educational practices, seeking the development of values of a pro-social nature, that is, values associated with collaboration, empathy and peaceful coexistence among people, since it should also be the objective of the school to promote citizenship and democracy in the context of society. The beliefs and values developed throughout the lives of teachers and students are, therefore, aspects that need to be considered in order to better understand and analyze the quality of teacher-student relationships throughout the teaching-learning process (BORGES DE MIRANDA, 2022; PAULA, 2024).

We know that the development of prosocial values and behaviors (OLMOS-GÓMEZ et al., 2023), for example, cooperation, solidarity, empathy, are mediated by the quality social actions and interactions experienced by children not only in the family, but also in school contexts (PAULA, 2024).

Currently, students no longer behave as they used to and "the truth is that society has changed, the family has changed and the student has also changed, but the school continues with its disciplinary models from decades ago" (BETCHER, 2018, p. 3). In countries such as Mozambique, for example, punishments such as putting students on their feet for some period of time, depriving them of break time, expelling them from the classroom and, even in some cases, implementing physical punishment, making social interactions between teacher and student in the classroom very unhealthy (CHALENGA et

al., 2024). In the case of Mozambique, the perpetuation of old disciplinary models may be due to the "oscillatory coexistence of several models of teacher training, determined, on the one hand, by financial policy and, on the other, by the limitation of the competence of many teachers and the quality of training programs" (CHALENGA et al., 2024, p. 21). This situation places Mozambican education in front of enormous challenges with regard to the restructuring of teaching and public education policies, making it especially difficult to improve the quality of teacher training to meet the dynamics of interactions in the contemporary school context. There have been many studies and research on the positive role of the use of cooperative games in the educational context (LYONS, 2022; KOHN, 2022; VALLEJO, 2023; HANGHØJ; KARNØE, 2024).

This theoretical article proposes to analyze, reflect and discuss the use of cooperative games as an interesting strategy for the development of pro-social actions and values in teacher-student interactions and also between students. To this end, we highlight the usefulness of cooperative play as an alternative pedagogical learning practice, capable of boosting not only the quality of learning and student performance but also promoting the ethical-moral development of students through pro-social relationships in the classroom environment.

The methodology developed in this article is of a bibliographic nature, since it uses research published in books, articles and publications from the ScIELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online) and Google Scholar databases. Authors such as VYGOTSKY (2008), BROTTTO et al., (2020), VALSINER (2012; 2021), LOPES DE OLIVEIRA (2021), LUCKESI (2022), BRANCO (2023), NEVES; MOURA (2024), PAULA (2024), among others, guide this study.

The following analyses and discussions are based on Semiotic Cultural Psychology (VALSINER, 2012, 2021), which emphasizes the co-constitutive relationship between subject and culture through the active process of internalization/externalization of meanings that takes place throughout ontogenesis. For the author, culture presents itself as a systemic organization of an affective-semiotic and historical nature, which includes artifacts, practices, beliefs and values that are at the basis of the processes of human development in its wide range of manifestations. According to LOPES DE OLIVEIRA, 2021), one of the characteristics of Cultural Psychology is the axiomatic finding of the dialogical relationship between individual and culture, which needs to be analyzed with a focus on understanding the role played by collective culture (external dimension) in the production of mental life or

personal culture (internal dimension) of individuals (PEREZ; MARSICO, 2023). LOPES DE OLIVEIRA (2021) criticizes analyses that make a rigid separation between culture, on the one hand, and the person, on the other. According to the author, "often, the cultural matrix is approached as a 'variable' that affects individual behavior from the outside and not as an intrinsically constitutive factor of the person, without which the babies of the species do not become human". (p. 43).

According to Cultural Psychology, and in line with VYGOTSKY (2008), the interactions between the various cultural contexts of development need to be taken into account when the objective is to better understand and explain the dynamics of human development. This is conceived as historically and culturally contextualized in the various systemic levels in which it occurs - micro, meso and macro - always resulting from the action of historical-cultural factors.

The article is structured as follows: the first section presents and discusses the concepts and relationships between play, play and children's development; the second analyzes cooperative games, their characteristics and historical evolution; and the third section deals, in particular, with the development of pro-social values from the perspective of Cultural Psychology, through social actions and interactions in the classrooms, emphasizing, particularly, the role of the teacher in these interactions.

## **GAMES, PLAY AND CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT**

For VYGOTSKY (2008), games are social practices that help children develop their higher mental, intellectual and socio-emotional functions, which will be used throughout life. Games provide the development of imagination, self-knowledge, understanding of their individuality within the group in which they are inserted, resilience and mutual respect. Cooperative collective play is part of the children's education process because, in addition to providing cognitive development, they stimulate socio-emotional development and the construction of pro-social values (QUEIROZ et al. 2006). Group games are especially important for the child's development, as they teach through pleasurable experience what cooperation, teamwork, solidarity, sociability, empathy and positive appreciation of the other are.

The game, the toy and the play are present in the life of the human being from the most remote times to the present day, in various manifestations such as religious, social, sports, educational and cultural (DANTAS, 2019). Next, we discuss the various concepts

associated with the notion of games and play and, in sequence, we highlight the games typically considered as cooperative, a topic of special interest for this work.

## **GAMES, PLAY, TOY AND PLAYFULNESS**

The game, the toy, the play and playfulness are tools that the child uses to build his world and promote his own development, whether individually or collectively (NEVES; MOURA, 2024). They can occur in different situations, such as in educational contexts, family contexts, etc., in which the child mobilizes his imagination, expanding knowledge about himself and the world. For the development of games and play, the child uses the toy to, in interaction with other children, develop in the sociocultural environment in which he is inserted. The differences between the terms or concepts used, however, are often subtle. Let's look at some of them.

SOLER (2008) states that the word game (*jocu*) has a Latin origin and has as its main meaning the notion of *joke*, that is, the game is fun and distraction. However, the game can also mean serious work, as it has the power to transform values, norms and attitudes (SOLER, 2008). Its playful function is to provide fun, pleasure and its educational function generates motivation and paths for the expansion of knowledge and discovery of the world by the child (KISHIMOTO, 2011). Therefore, the use of games in the classroom transforms this educational context into a fun and pleasurable place, thus ensuring effective learning and integral development of students.

As a cultural phenomenon, the game can act to promote learning and development in general, and also acts in the development of affectivity. By engaging in the game, children are able to deal with certain psychological difficulties, for example, experiences involving frustration, fear, *bullying* and prejudice, resulting from the various social interactions they experience. KISHIMOTO (2011) states that

The child's play is not only anchored in the present, but also tries to solve problems of the past, while projecting itself into the future. The girl who plays with dolls anticipates her possible motherhood and tries to face the emotional pressures of the present. Playing with dolls allows her to act out her ambivalent feelings, such as love for her mother and jealousy of her little brother who receives maternal care. Playing with dolls in an infinity of ways is intimately linked to the girl's relationship with her mother (p. 76).

Playing is an activity that allows the development of socio-emotional, cognitive, affective skills and the development of personal capacities, and, therefore, should be encouraged by both the family and teachers (SOLÍS-CORDERO, 2023). Children while playing expose their feelings, learn, build, explore, think, reinvent and move. In this sense, LUSTOSA (2022) states that it is important to

positively encourage the child to play, whether individually or in a group, as this allows him to advance, through imagination, in terms of development.

HUIZINGA (2012), in his work *Homo Ludens* (playful man), considers the game as an important element of human culture from a historical-sociological perspective. The author presents the game as prior to culture, that is, as a fact older than culture, accompanying and marking it from the most distinct origins to the phase of civilization in which we live. Everywhere there is play, where everything is movement, change, alternation, succession, association, competition and cooperation, with the presence of the element of surprise.

We agree with DANTAS (2019) when she states that studies and theories are necessary to better define and elaborate conceptions about the game, since not every playful activity has been considered a game. Games and playful activities, however, have very approximate meanings. Regarding the polysemy of meanings and the use of the expression "game", BROUGÈRE (2003) says that

It is not a matter of saying what the game is, what it should be, but of understanding in which strategies this word is used, why a reflection on education may or may not appropriate this term to express its choices. In fact, all the discourses that advocate that the teacher should resort to the game cannot be considered equivalent. The very idea that one has of the game varies according to authors and times, the way it is used and the reasons for this use are equally different (p. 9).

KISHIMOTO (2011) draws attention to the diversity of phenomena conceptualized as game, thus confirming the complexity of defining the word game. In this sense, he assures that among "the playful materials, some are usually called games, others, toys" (p. 15). In order to understand possible differences between game and toy, Brougère (2003) presents three aspects involved in the differentiation of the term game: (1) the fact that this term is used to mean "playful activity" in different contexts, and it is important to respect the routine and social use of language, presuming different interpretations; (2) the fact that the game has explicit rules that differentiate a specific game from the others; (3) the term is sometimes used in association with an object, the "toy". For example, the spinning top, which can be made of wood, plastic or other materials, represents the object used in the game of the spinning wheel.

Authors such as (BACELAR, 2009; BROWN, 1994; LIMA *et al.*, 2019 and LUCKESI, 2022) affirm the importance of human beings experiencing playfulness throughout their life trajectory, as an incentive for people's constant development, well-being, and mental health. According to BROWN (1994), by getting involved in playful activities, we are realizing who we are and who we will become, which generates permanent development. In games, important skills are developed, such as: (1)



*empathy*, or the ability to put oneself affectively in the place of the other; (2) *cooperation*, or the ability to work toward a common goal; (3) *esteem*, or the ability to recognize and express the importance and needs of others, including one's own self-esteem; and (4) *communication*, or the ability to dialogue, which involves listening, expressing, and exchanging feelings, knowledge, and perspectives. However, when we analyze the issue based on Cultural Psychology, it is necessary to emphasize that such results depend on the specific rules of each game, as competitive games can generate feelings and actions that are not necessarily prosocial, such as aggressiveness and disregard for the other (PALMIERI; BRANCO, 2014)

SOARES (2021) states that the ambiguities present in the meanings of the terms can be observed, especially in countries that adopt the same word to define play and play, such as *play*, in English, *jouer*, in French, or *giocare*, in Italian. The term *play*, in Portuguese, means "act or feat of playing", and the definition of play corresponds to "to have fun, recreate, entertain, distract, have fun", among other meanings. As the author points out, it can be concluded that,

The terms game, play, toy and playfulness are articulated with each other, especially presenting the idea of distraction associated with the joy or satisfaction in playing or playing. Each definition also has its specificities, linked to action (such as play), materiality (the term toy), reasoning by rules (in reference to the game) or fun activities (playfulness) (SOARES, 2021, p. 43).

## IMPACT OF GAMES AND PLAY ON DEVELOPMENT

According to VYGOTSKY (2008), with play, *the Zones of Proximal or Imminent Development* are created and moved, a key concept in the historical-cultural theory. These, in short, consist of the areas in which the child can perform actions with the help of an adult or more experienced colleague. In these areas, the child learns with help and, later, can act alone. Through play, children incorporate practices and exercise social positions that circulate in their context, but their actions not only reproduce the situations experienced, they actively re-elaborate and build new situations in a creative way, based on their needs. By playing, the child comes into contact with various feelings, for example, joy, satisfaction, wish fulfillment, as well as feelings of anger and frustration. Playing also allows and stimulates collaboration, confidence in oneself and in others from the experience of sharing spaces and experiences with other people. These benefits can, therefore, be strengthened in the school environment, including in a planned way by adults.

In play, the child uses the toy as a cultural resource. It attributes creative meanings to the toy, as it gains new meanings in the context of play (BROUGÈRE, 2003). However, toys, when inserted in a social system, contain certain meanings and refer to elements of the real world articulated in the child's imagination. The manufacturer, or the subject who builds toys, introduces signs into them that

suggest meanings that vary according to culture. Manufactured toys are thus impregnated with cultural messages that can lead to the internalization of specific practices and values (VALSINER, 2012). On the other hand, it is worth highlighting, as stated by VYGOTSKY (2008), that the child does not need manufactured toys at all for the exercise of this central activity - playing - for his development. Their imagination is widely developed and applied to the activity when a simple stick or stick is transformed into a sword and a horse, and the practice of their creative imagination is fundamental for the play to result in the expansion of their integral development.

When the toy is used for pedagogical purposes, the teacher expects it to be an instrument that provides the motivation and engagement of children in the teaching-learning processes. By assuming the playful-pedagogical function, the educational toy can perform two functions, as defined by KISHIMOTO (2011): (1) the playful function: the toy provides fun, pleasure and even displeasure, when chosen voluntarily; and (2) the educational function: the toy helps to expand knowledge and understand the world.

How to define playfulness, however? For LIMA *et al.* (2019) The word ludic originates from the Latin language, *ludus*, which means game, fun, entertainment, play, or rather, the act of playing. In this way, a playful activity is something that, when performed, generates pleasure, fun, and the person who participates in the action manifests a sense of physical and psychological well-being. DANTAS (2019), in turn, states that the concept of playfulness is articulated with the fact that: "(1) playful activities are cultural creations, they are social acts, arising from the relationships of men among themselves in society; and that (2) playfulness is a state of mind, a state of mind that expresses a feeling of surrender, of wholeness, of full experience, and concerns the internal reality of the individual" (p. 254).

BACELAR (2009) highlights that, when the individual is in the playful state, he experiences an experience that fully integrates feeling, thought and action. And it is through this playful experience that the child learns from the experience, in an integrated way, that is, his experience goes beyond the simple performance of the activity, the child is fully mobilized in his ways of feeling, thinking and acting.

When several children are in the play circle, the way each one of them experiences, feels and internally experiences this experience in an individual and subjective way. However, when the teacher plans and develops structured activities (through implicit or explicit rules) to promote a certain modality of interaction - for example, competitive or cooperative - he makes it possible for certain interactive patterns among his students to be maximized by the action of the cultural channeling processes provided for by Cultural Psychology (BRANCO, 2023; WHITE; LOPES DE



OLIVEIRA, 2018). Thus, when planning their pedagogical practices, teachers must take this into account, and this is where the great potential represented by the adoption of cooperative games in the classroom lies.

The playful resources intentionally used in the teaching-learning processes tend to facilitate both the construction of knowledge in the various stages of schooling and the development of positive social values (COSTA; CARDOSO, 2022). Therefore, it is important to consider play as a driving force for the child's learning and integrated development. In addition, cooperative playful activities awaken and develop children's creativity, autonomy and social integration (PALMIERI; BRANCO, 2014).

The playful experience, therefore, should be interpreted as the moment in which the child is enchanted by the feeling of freedom and relaxation, directly stimulating his autonomy in a paid way, with the aim of getting out of the routine. Thus, cooperative playful activities can favor collaborative and pro-sociability actions that enrich collective coexistence. GARCIA *et al.* (2025) underlines this by saying that cooperative play is a playful activity applied as a teaching-learning method. It strengthens different areas of child development, both the cognitive area and the socio-emotional areas of children. In the following section, the focus is on cooperative games that, in our perspective, can greatly contribute to the promotion of the objectives of educational institutions, both in terms of the academic performance of children and their formation as democratic, collaborative and solidary human beings.

## **COOPERATIVE GAMES AND THEIR FEATURES**

According to SOLER (2011), the social psychologist Morton Deutsch began several studies on cooperation and competition through experiments in the field of psychology, still in the 40s. Ted Lenz, an activist in the 50s, also proposed the use of cooperative games for the development of actions in favor of the culture of peace in the United States. Soler refers to anthropologist Margaret Mead, who analyzed studies in various societies in the 60s and concluded that the frequency of competition or cooperation activities depends on the characteristics of each culture., According to the author, Jim and Ruth Deacove, in 1972, created cooperative games after observing their daughters fighting more than playing; and then they decided to create their own games.

In Brazil, Fábio Brotto created in 1992, together with Gisela Franco, the *Cooperation Project* - community of services, dedicated to the dissemination of cooperative games and the ethics of cooperation, through workshops, lectures, events, publications and production of didactic materials.

In 1995, Brotto published a pioneering book in the history of cooperative games in Brazil, *'Cooperative Games: if the important thing is to compete, the fundamental thing is to cooperate'* (BROTTO, 2000). And, in 2013, he released the book with the title, *'Cooperative games: the game and the export as an exercise of coexistence'* (BROTTO, 2013). In 2020, he released the book entitled, *'Pedagogy of Cooperation: for a world where all people can VenSer'* (BROTTO et al., 2020), while Soler published the books *'Cooperative Games'* (SOLER, 2002), *'Cooperative Games for Early Childhood Education'* (SOLER, 2003), *'Playing and Learning with Cooperative Games'* (SOLER, 2008), where it presents 420 games and it is published in 2011 and launches in 2009 the book entitled *'210 new cooperative games for all ages'* (SOLER, 2009). In turn, Fortin published his book, *'100 cooperative games: I cooperate, I have fun'* (FORTIN, 2011), and Almeida published in 2011 his book, *'Cooperative games – in the different contexts'* (ALMEIDA, 2011).

Recently, Araújo and Costa e Silva published the book *'Cooperative games – contemplating the society of the XXI century'* (ARAÚJO; COSTA E SILVA, 2022), where in the preface they invite readers to a magical journey through the universe of cooperation, empathy, being-with-other, (with-)living. The authors state that, in order to cooperate, we need to live the experience, bringing to the reader a set of cooperative games that motivate the person to play, causing a feeling of fullness and well-being.

The references presented above are some examples of the steps taken towards systematizing knowledge and experiences in cooperative games. These steps represent signs that point to a promising future full of possibilities for various studies and application of cooperative games in educational and sociocultural contexts (PAIS, et al., 2024).

SOLER (2008) divided the games into individual or collective, and the collective games divided into competitive and cooperative. Thus, the author proposes some characteristics that differentiate the competitive and cooperative ways of playing (Chart 1, p. 34).

**Table 1 - Main characteristics of competitive and cooperative games**

<b>Competitive</b>	<b>Cooperative</b>
Individualist	Group
Limited participation	Everyone participates
Disorder	Organization
Winner/Loser	Everyone wins
Disunity	Union
Cheating/Cleverness	Honesty
Frustrating	Reassuring
Limiting	Spacious
Repudiation	Welcome/Trust
Conformity	Collective challenge
"The game is me"	"The game is us"

Adapted from the book *Playing and Learning with Cooperative Games* by SOLER, R., 2008, p. 34

SOLER (2011) uses the term 'cooperative games' to designate activities based on cooperation and the peaceful resolution of conflicts, whose main purpose is to unite people around a common goal. The goal should be to overcome obstacles and challenges faced by the group. Therefore, teachers can resort to cooperative games to plan pedagogical actions that stimulate the development of social interactions that generate empathy, cooperation and solidarity, instead of discrimination, aggressiveness, competition and *bullying*. According to the author, several studies have demonstrated the effects of cooperation, because "if we intend to transform a competitive and aggressive culture, it would be important to rely on games based on cooperative principles" (SOLER, 2011, p. 28). SNOWS; MOURA (2024) highlights this point by stating "as children of all ages love to play, cooperative games are a pleasurable, natural and fun way to reduce the damage caused by excessive competition" (p. 6). For the authors, the alternative to competition is cooperation, where students work together to achieve a mutually desirable goal. Therefore,

Cooperative games are alternative activities for an extremely competitive world, presenting a character of solidarity, and not exclusion. Goals and results are stimulated through challenges, and these must be achieved collectively, providing opportunities for everyone's satisfaction (CALIZARIO *et al.*, 2022, p. 5).

The cooperative activities that the teacher brings to the classroom tend to provoke positive emotions and feelings in students in relation to themselves and others. Thus, cooperative pedagogy allows schools, in addition to teaching reading, writing or arithmetic, to promote essential human values such as cooperation, friendship, love, compassion and justice (CALIZARIO *et al.*, 2022). The school needs to teach cooperation. Cooperation involves communicating, listening, helping, encouraging, committing, sharing, and participating in the resolution of group activities. And the best way to do this is through cooperative working models within the classroom and in the school context as a whole.

PALMIERI; BRANCO (2014), in the book *Early Childhood Education and Cooperation*, when answering the question '*what do pedagogical practices promote?*', came to the conclusion that every educational proposal oriented to promote constructive development processes must create a learning environment capable of strengthening the autonomy, solidarity and creative capacity of the child, considering the mutual constitution (interdependence) between practices and cultural values by they cultivated.

By observing several groups playing, SOLER (2008) recorded some striking characteristics in the behaviors of people in the two modalities - competitive or cooperative - of games (Chart 2, p. 85).

**Table 2 - Striking characteristics of behaviors during competitive and cooperative games**

<b>Competitive Gaming</b>	<b>Co-op Games</b>
Fighting to win alone, no matter what weapons you have to use	Negotiating to resolve conflicts so that everyone can win
Rematch	Forgiveness
Exclusion of the least skilled	Inclusion of all differences
Winning or losing as ends in themselves	Winning or losing as a means to a learning process
War Games	Peace Games
We play against them	We play with them
Comparing	Enjoying
Ordering	Suggesting
Blame for defeat or victory	Responsibility for victory or defeat
Fear, envy, hatred, ambition to win	Courage, solidarity, love, and willingness to keep playing
Every man for himself	Interdependence
Always the same leader. Preferably the best player	Shared leadership. Preferably, that everyone can experience this leadership
Game with a predictable ending. As soon as you reach the final goal, you lose your grace	Infinite game; continues as long as the group is ready to play

Adapted from the book *Playing and Learning with Cooperative Games* by SOLER, R., 2008, p. 85

According to BRANCO; MANZINI; PALMIERI (2012), contexts structured in a competitive way tend to generate disputes and relationship problems, while cooperative activities tend to facilitate or promote cooperative interactional and solidarity dynamics. Thus, the experience of cooperative situations favors the occurrence of interactions of a pro-social nature, leading the individual to relate positively in relation to the needs and well-being of other people. In the book entitled '*Playing and Learning with Cooperative Games*', SOLER (2008) states that cooperative games "have the power to transform the lives of people who let themselves be involved by the ability of cooperative games to modify behaviors, creating cooperative alternatives to our competitive dependence" (p. 21).

BRANCO (1998) refers to her empirical work in her doctorate, which demonstrates how the implementation of activities guided by a teacher that stimulated cooperative interactions among students produced high levels of pro-sociability in her classroom in early childhood education. It is also worth mentioning here the quasi-experiment carried out by Branco and Valsiner (see BRANCO, 1998) based on Semiotic Cultural Psychology. In this research, two triads, composed of two boys and a girl of three years each, participated in seven sessions in which they had to play together. One triad participated in sessions in which activities were structured in a cooperative manner, and the other, in typically individual and competitive activities. After these sessions, each triad participated in a test session, or evaluation, in which the three children of the two triads were asked to perform a cooperative task: carrying a large doll to different spaces in the classroom so that it could be "cared for" in the "hospital", "at home", etc. The result was surprising in terms of the large difference in how

often the cooperative triad had cooperative interactions and performed the task with the doll adequately. while the competitive triad, in the test session, was unable to cooperate, not performing the requested task.

It is concluded, therefore, that cooperative games can effectively contribute to the construction of inclusive and collaborative environments, favoring the creation of bonds of trust between people and, with that, the transformation of society itself. For this to happen, WHITE; LOPES DE OLIVEIRA (2018), in the book '*Alterity, values, and socialization: human development within educational contexts*', ensure that teachers, by using cooperative games in the classroom, will be able to co-construct with students a receptive, dialogical climate, based on trust. This would create a pleasant environment in which attention, motivation and learning would favor better school performance and the development of students in general.

According to Semiotic Cultural Psychology (VALSINER, 2012, 2021), there is much empirical evidence that confirms the occurrence of cultural channeling of practices and values. This channeling consists of a process through which people internalize the explicit and implicit messages of the culture, thus appropriating the messages inserted in these practices and values typical of that cultural context. Once internalized, these messages are then externalized into context, further strengthening the typical practices and values of the specific culture. Thus, it is possible to indicate the use of cooperative pedagogy by teachers as a strategy to work on the quality of relationships in the classroom. With this, they will be encouraging not only cooperation, but also their students' autonomy, self-esteem and motivation to learn, leading to the expansion of all their possibilities and potentials (BROTTO *et al*, 2020) towards joint and constructive work for a better world. Hence our interest in analyzing the processes involved in the development of values through the interactions and social relationships established by the teacher with his or her students in the classroom.

## **PROSOCIAL VALUES AND ACTIONS IN CLASSROOM INTERACTIONS**

MANZINI; BRANCO (2017) analyze the issue from the perspective of Cultural Psychology. They claim that pro-social values and actions are intended to meet the needs and well-being of another person. Prosocial actions, however, need to be genuinely voluntary, that is, individuals do not suffer any type of coercion or rewards to carry them out. Those who practice them do so out of intrinsic motivation, the person is happy to cooperate, to help. According to Cultural Psychology (VALSINER, 2012, 2021), social practices (actions) generate values, which, in turn, generate

corresponding practices, through bidirectional co-construction processes. Thus, by practicing pro-sociality - including proposing cooperative activities in the classroom - teachers are stimulating the internalization of pro-social values.

In Cultural Psychology, the issue of affect is primary, it is a precursor to the construction of meanings, which are always impregnated with affectivity, feelings and emotions (VALSINER, 2021). Affective phenomena are dynamically complex and difficult to describe. According to SANTAMALVINA DOS SANTOS (2020), these are complex processes, related to fields of self-generated affect that grow, become broad, and give rise to hypergeneralized fields capable of guiding the person's conduct.

Cultural channeling is the process by which explicit (direct), implicit (indirect) or ambivalent social cues, present in cultural practices and values, guide the development of the person. In other words, social and cultural messages generate an active system of internalization and externalization of ideas and actions by the developing subject. According to VALSINER (2021), human beings are involved in a constant process of reconstruction of their intrapsychological worlds by the constant exchange of perceptive and affective-semiotic materials with the environment. The processes of signification co-constructed in this permanent exchange constitute both the subjects and the culture, through the processes of internalization and externalization. This is how these processes generate the development of human values and corresponding practices, these being co-constructed between the person and the cultural context in which he or she lives.

Valsiner states that "internalization is the process of incorporating externally existing semiotic materials and appropriating them in a new form within the intrapsychological, subjective domain" (VALSINER, 2012, p. 283). Internalization, however, is always a constructive process, which transforms the external material into an internally differentiated form. For example, if the social agent, a teacher-mediator, manifests cooperative social actions and interactions in the classroom context, he consolidates not only the teaching-learning but also allows the development of cooperative and pro-social actions/interactions in general, based on the social messages present there. Therefore, internalization allows us to understand how the various external affective-semiotic materials, present in the culture, generate significant messages that are actively incorporated into the psyche of the subject, who, in turn, will externalize them in the context of the culture.

For Cultural Psychology,

The probability of internalizing social messages and suggestions, in the sense of an appropriation very close to what is being suggested, increases in direct proportion to the person's positive affect relationships with those that are affectively significant to him. In other words, feelings of affection, affection and love generate a greater probability of internalizing ideas, beliefs and values (MANZINI; BRANCO, 2017, p. 50).



Internalization, according to VALSINER (2012), is, therefore, the appropriation of externally existing affective-semiotic materials and their reconstructive synthesis in the sphere of the subjects' personal culture. This process, affectively oriented, leads the subject to incorporate, in an active and creative way, certain meanings, including conventional ways of feeling established during the history of co-construction of the cultural group (LOPES DE OLIVEIRA; WHITE; ARAÚJO; PAULA, 2025). On the other hand, the subject also introduces novelties into the culture, he negotiates and interacts in different scenarios created by the collective through externalization processes, which, according to VALSINER (2021), is the process of transposition from the inside of the person (internalized meanings) to the outside, capable of modifying the external context, acting on the culture.

Like internalization, externalization is a constructive process - the syntheses produced by the person's actions in the environment are new in relation to the previous states of the environment. In short, the constructive processes of internalization and externalization are constantly in action, and it is thus that, by organizing cultural environments that favor certain modes of relationship, we are promoting the internalization of the specific practices and values practiced there.

VALSINER (2021) defines values as basic human resources with an ontologically internalized affective-semiotic orientation, and their internalization can be observed in various moments and aspects of human conduct. They originate in affective-semiotic fields, internalized through processes of cultural channeling. To this end, the affective-semiotic fields

arise throughout the subject's life and can be strengthened through cultural channeling, especially through the relationship with significant [social] others, starting to act over time ontogenic and irreversible, as values located at the highest level of the hierarchy of the relationship, level 4. While certain affective-semiotic fields become strong enough to guide the subject's thoughts and actions, such as values and prejudices, other fields can transform or disappear throughout ontogenesis, based on new relationships established between personal culture and collective culture, particularly through relationships with significant others (BORGES DE MIRANDA, 2022, p. 46).

As the affective-semiotic fields are strengthened, they reach the condition of "hypergeneralized affective-semiotic fields" (VALSINER, 2012, 2021). Values are therefore actively internalized and generalized 'field' signs that guide how the person will perceive, feel, think, and act. The redundancy of these social suggestions, that is, their simultaneous and repeated diffusion in different spheres and instances, cooperates for their efficiency in regulating, or guiding, the perceptions, feelings, thoughts, and actions of the individual.

When the teacher proposes cooperative activities, and also interacts according to pro-social values/practices, he is encouraging the internalization and expression (externalization) of values and

practices of the same nature (pro-social), promoting an environment of healthy social relations. Social interactions at school become, therefore, constructive and capable of promoting pro-sociability, thus favoring empathy, positive appreciation of the other, and willingness to collaborate.

Promoting pro-sociability is the main alternative to deal with behaviors considered antisocial, both individual and collective. For MANZINI; BRANCO (2017), the increase in pro-social actions produces a decrease in violent behavior. In this way, pro-sociability constitutes a powerful reducer of violence, and an effective builder of reciprocity, helping to consolidate a social system based on the culture of empathy, generosity and collaboration, important characteristics for the construction of peace in a democratic context.

These authors also call attention to the existence of social contexts that favor cooperation, affections and pro-social actions, while others are organized in such a way that they lead or induce competition and disqualification of the other, generating hostility and violence among people. Considering that the culture in which we live is typically individualistic and competitive, it is not surprising that examples of distrust and aggressiveness increasingly predominate in human relationships.

We know that pro-social actions such as helping, giving, sharing, consoling, valuing and cooperating are compatible with a school learning environment that strengthens the child's autonomy, creative capacity, solidarity and cooperation. PALMIERI; BRANCO (2014) argue that, whenever possible, it is important to engage students in carrying out daily tasks that involve actions of cooperation and mutual help in interactions with others. Helping, sharing, and caring are actions that generate benefits for the plaintiff (of the lawsuit) and the one who receives it (MEDEIROS, 2023).

PAULA (2024), in turn, underlines the need to establish a dialogical relationship of trust between teacher and students, which is essential in basic education. By generating confidence, this also generates self-esteem and autonomy in students, and expands the internalization of ethical and pro-social values. Once internalized, these values then become capable of guiding the perception, feelings, thoughts and actions of the students. In other words, dialogical relationships in which teachers listen to and value the voices of students generate welcoming and safe contexts, which inspire a positive and harmonious climate among group members (FREITAS, 2019).

It is therefore worth asking: why does negative educational practices still prevail in the relationship between teachers and students, for example, aggressive, humiliating, derogatory? WHITE; LOPES DE OLIVEIRA (2018) state that, many times, teachers do not promote interactions, debates, discussions and creative initiatives in their classrooms for fear of losing control of the group.

In addition, most educators are unaware of how their own underlying beliefs and values guide their actions and interactions. This means that if they believe that certain children are slow or messy, incapable of learning or concentrating, they end up interacting with them in a harsh or aggressive way, leading to the fulfillment of "self-fulfilling prophecies" (ROSENTHAL; JACOBSON, 2003) that end up generating students with even more learning and/or concentration difficulties.

Thus, it is necessary for educators to be aware of the fact that constructive teacher-student relationships are the basis of academic success, as well as it is essential that they understand their responsibility to encourage the ethical-moral development of students through the stimulation of pro-sociability. To do so, the educator-facilitator must present a certain profile, such as being "communicative, kind, friendly, creative, flexible, cheerful, sensitive, patient and sensory" (ARAÚJO & COSTA and SILVA, 2022, p. 34). For this, the educator must be aware of the principles pointed out by the authors above, so that he can guide his students in the construction of their own principles, not only for professional life, but also to *educate for life*.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is in childhood that the child begins to develop values, skills and abilities that will impact his entire development process throughout life. In view of this, planning pedagogical practices and social interactions that favor the development of both academic and prosocial values and practices in school years becomes extremely important. Throughout this article, our objective was to argue, based on numerous evidences, that cooperative play, the pedagogical use of a dialogical character of cooperative games by the teacher can favor teaching-learning processes and the full development of students, thus consisting of an alternative pedagogical strategy of significant value.

In this way, it is possible to conclude that teachers do have a central role in this direction, and it is necessary that they reflect well and understand the potential of adopting cooperative games and developing a dialogical paradigm in their classrooms, where listening to and welcoming the voices of students is an essential part of all pedagogical practices adopted by them. In this sense, it will be important to act in the basic and continuing education of teachers to expand their professional and personal resources in a manner consistent with the proposal presented here. This will allow them to be adequately trained not only in the pure and simple transmission of content, but also in terms of social skills and creative planning capable of mobilizing involvement, motivated engagement, in the activities proposed by the students.

It is also necessary to stimulate the realization of empirical research on the subject to provide well-founded subsidies so that the implementation of new and creative pedagogical practices can be, in fact, efficient. In short, it is not enough to teach teachers new ideas and give them suggestions; It is necessary for teachers to start internalizing new beliefs and values about how student motivation is central to learning, and how dialogue with students, associated with creative practices, represent an immense pedagogical potential to be explored in schools. It is not possible to think or build a truly democratic culture, in peace, and based on the ethics of relationships, disregarding the role played by schools in our societies. Hence the urgent need for changes in the dynamics of classrooms in this direction.

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