



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### TEACHING PRACTICE IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

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#### ABSTRACT

Teacher thought and action are variables that have been considered as explanatory of the teaching - learning in the classroom. At work the theories of action of educators about the personal and social development in preschool children are described and exposed the relationship between their theories and theories in use is analyzed. He was approached from a qualitative perspective, using the technique of case study. We worked with three educators two kindergartens in Mexico City. Strategies, techniques, and materials used were written and educational planning, stimulation of memory and semi structured interview. After analyzing the data we can say that educators are governed by different elements: Knowledge discipline on the personal and social development, influence the official program of preschool, immediacy of the situation, knowledge about students, trust and coexistence and establishing rules.

#### INTRODUCTION

Jackson (1996) it is one of the forerunners in the study of teaching thought. In his work "Life in the classrooms" he presents the results of his study carried out with 50 teachers. Jackson's study considers the teacher as an active agent who acts on the school context and makes decisions in the implementation of the curriculum. This study gave guidelines to consider that when the teacher enters the classroom different events occur that lead him to act in one way or another; They were found to be driven by an intuitive process based on reflection of what is happening in the classroom.

Clark and Peterson (1990) indicate that teachers' thinking, planning and decision-making is a very important part of the psychological context of teaching, in which teachers teach and students learn. According to these authors, the study of teaching thinking has two objectives: a) to describe broadly the teacher's thought processes and, b) to explain the how and why of the activities he carries out in his practice. In this regard, Torres (1996) indicates that researchers interested in the study of teaching thought intend to create a type of faithful knowledge in relation to what happens in school institutions. Studying teaching thinking leads to a description of teaching that may be useful to other teachers, theorists, researchers, educational planners, curriculum creators, and teacher educators (Clark and Peterson, 1990) (2). The knowledge generated in this study is expected to be useful to these education professionals.

One of the concepts used for the study of teaching thought is that of theories of action. Theories of action are a set of interconnected propositions that have a single referent: the subject of the theory (Argyris and Schön, 1974). A theory of action is a theory of deliberate human behavior. All deliberate behavior is based on a mental construct that is normative, since it tells the subject what to do to achieve a purpose, therefore, the theories of action are composed of a set of values, guiding variables, assumptions, beliefs, knowledge and action strategies that aim to guide the individual. The focus of the theories of action shows the importance of studying the influence of context on thought and teaching practice, since it can lead to discrepancies between what is believed and what is done with what is done. The above may originate from situational and interpersonal influences and in this sense clearly establish the difference between thinking and executing, that is, between thinking and action, and pay attention to the relationship between the two (Jiménez and Feliciano, 2006). In this regard, Jackson (1996) found that the thinking process and activities that teachers plan are different from those carried out in situations when they are in contact with their students. Clark and Peterson (1990) point out that to a great extent what teachers do is the result of what they think, since, if the educational practice were thoughtless, it would become mechanical, so a machine could lead it to cape; however, if teaching continues to be done by humans, it is necessary to consider and study the relationship between teachers' thinking and action. In this sense, it is customary to deduce the teacher's action through only studying thought, so, according to Kane, Sandretto and Heath (2002) the story is incomplete. These authors consider that the investigation of the beliefs and knowledge of the teachers allows us to emphasize the importance of the role they play in the development of teaching practice, however, to fully understand teaching, it is

necessary to take into account the study of the actions of the teachers and the relationship between them; the approach to theories of action contributes to this study. A central reference in this field is the work of Argyris and Schön (1974) (4) in relation to the theories of action, although it has focused on the practices that are carried out in the advice of organizations, personal orientation and of the interpersonal dimension of professions such as: business management, public administration and teaching; stating that human beings in their personal relationships design their behavior and hold theories to act in a certain way (Schön, 1992). Theories of action are based on a view of people as active agents acting on their environment. Human beings learn from their actions and use their learning to plan future actions that will lead them to achieve the desired results (Kane, Sandretto and Heath, 2002).

The theories of action are divided into exposed theories and theories in use. The theories presented are constructs that are expressed orally or in writing through different documents that regulate or regulate administrative processes, they are more related to what is established in official documents (Argyris and Schön, 1974), they are used to justify or explain the behavior (Schön, 1992). When someone is questioned about how they behave under certain circumstances, they usually answer with the exposed theories of action for this situation, this is the theory of action to which they are loyal and who, upon request, communicates to others. The theories in use are unspoken structures in the patterns of spontaneous behavior (Schön, 1992) and govern the actual behavior, these theories are obtained through observing the behavior and by asking people for an explanation of their behavior. Theories in use include knowledge about people, behavior, physical objects, the use of articles, organizations, and other domains of human behavior (Argyris and Schön, 1974). People are often surprised when they realize that they may be inconsistent with the theories presented, when they are presented with the opportunity to reflect on directly observable data in the reality of interpersonal action (Schön, 1992). Each person has different theories in use, one for each type of situation, for example: a teacher can act in one way with the boys, in another way with the girls and in a different way with all the members of a group; Although he can act consistently with each type of student, in this case he governs the use of different theories in use, since they are consistent with the type of student (Argyris and Schön, 1974). These two types of theories allow us to distinguish what teachers believe, know, and say regarding their educational practice, what they do and the explanations they give to what they do (García, 2003). Both theories have an individual and an organizational reflection.

To better explain the theories of action, they can be exemplified with the case of a teacher who is asked how he would act to promote autonomy, what would answer this question would be the exposed theories of action, and when observed in the classroom and asked why and for what he did a specific activity, his answer is the theories in use. There may be incompatibility between the exposed theories of action and the theories in use, therefore the need to study both. For example, an educator may mention that she encourages cooperative work among her students, because she believes that it is important to promote activities where everyone has an important mission and if they do not fulfill it, the objective is not achieved, therefore, when they go to wash their hands each child is assigned a role (the one who carries the soap, the one who carries the paper towels, the one in charge of the trash can

in which the towels are deposited, the caretaker of the water, the one who assigns the turns), without however, if it is observed that a child is going to wash himself, the educator can mention that this happens because he finished before the others, it is also full of glue or paint and can stain his classmates or his works. In this example there is no congruence between the exposed theories of action and the theories in use, since the situation was what determined the action, and therefore it is important to know why the teacher acted in this way. Kane, Sandretto and Heath (2002) mention that these inconsistencies suggest that teachers' beliefs and knowledge do not constitute a simply causal path of practice, this relationship is more complex, considering the different factors involved in teaching work: the social context in which the practice, beliefs, values and expectations of peers, academics, administrators and students take place. It is necessary to study not only the teacher's speech, but we must also focus on the analysis of instruction, the characteristics of current practice and the relationship between the two, to have a broader view of the teacher and his work in the educational field.

In this work, a frame of reference was chosen from which it is possible to describe and explain the teacher's thinking and action, considering the teacher as a professional who is immersed in a context in which different factors that influence the action in the classroom. The theories of action approach were used, in order not to assume that what the educators say is effectively what they do in their educational practice in the classroom. Below, some research carried out from the theories of action approach is presented. Three studies were carried out in Venezuela: Centeno (2008) investigated the predominant concepts of the staff of the Libertador Experimental Pedagogical University, investigated their relationship with aspects such as: diversity, ideas of the other, active tolerance and solidarity that allow to strengthen a culture of peace. Identifying that the exposed theories of the concept of peace of the actors of the Experimental Pedagogical University start from the philosophical, religious, and poetic, without finding much difference with the theories in use. Petit (2008) carried out a work for action within the Maranatha Christian Church, organizational technology was applied for the construction and support of the Corporate Vision from the theories of action. It was concluded that, through the combination of the theories of action approach and the application of organizational technology, leaders possess an instrument for the construction of the corporate vision, design strategies and techniques to share and sustain the vocation of the system. Peñaloza (2005), carried out an investigation whose objective was to establish a first approach to organizational behavior patterns in the Dean of Graduate Studies of the Santa María University, in this work document analysis, observation was used Participant and interviews, little congruence was identified between the theories exposed and in use in the coordination of the programs.

In accordance with what was previously discussed, the theories of action approach are a feasible option for the study of teaching thought and action. This study tries to describe the exposed theories of the action of preschool teachers, as well as their theories in use regarding that of personal and social development in preschool children and to analyze the relationship between the exposed theories of action and the theories in use. The knowledge generated has useful implications for the educational field, since a description of

teaching is reached. It is important to consider that to understand the teaching action, you must start from real situations and from the explanation that the educator gives to your actions. In this regard, Torres (1996) (3), indicates that researchers interested in the study of teaching thought seek to create a type of knowledge in relation to what happens in school institutions. Studying teaching thinking leads to a description of teaching that may be useful to other teachers, theorists, researchers, educational planners, curriculum creators, and teacher educators (Clark and Peterson, 1990). The knowledge generated in this study is expected to be useful to these education professionals.

## METHODS

**Participants:** Three educators of public kindergartens in Mexico City. One of the first, one of the second and one of the third grade.

**Ethical management:** The names of the children have been changed, the names of the educators, the kindergarten, and the area to which they belong have been omitted.

**Strategies, techniques, and materials to obtain data:** Writings of the educator. To investigate the exposed theories of action, the educators were asked to write down what they thought when they carried out weekly planning, in relation to the training field of personal and social development (Gómez, 2008)

**Planning of educators:** With the aim of identifying the exposed theories of action regarding personal and social development in preschool children, how to promote it and its relationship with the theories in use. It is assumed that the theories of action are related to what is officially established (Argyris and Schön, 1974).

**Semi-structured interview:** Which served to identify the exposed theories of the educators. The interview covered aspects mentioned in the "Study Program 2011, guide for the educator. Basic Preschool Education" (SEP, 2011) (13) in relation to personal and social development, this program was resumed as it is the one that governs preschool education in Mexico. In the interview, the researcher asked a series of generating questions, which generated responses in the subject based on their experience and knowledge associated with personal and social development.

**Memory stimulation (Clark & Peterson, 1990):** With the aim of investigating the theories in use by educators. This strategy consisted of videotaping for three days the performance of the teachers in the classroom, later the scenes related to personal and social development were selected. Once the scenes were selected, the teacher and the researcher observed them; The scene stopped to ask the educator what she thought of the scene? To find out the explanations that the educator gave to her actions, what led her to behave in this way? and the consequences of this behavior.

**Type of study:** The present work was approached from a qualitative perspective, using the instrumental case study technique (Stake, 1998) (14), since it is an instrument to understand, analyze and systematically interpret the phenomenon to be studied, in this case the theories exposed and the theories in use and allows us to approach the phenomenon in the context in which it is presented.

**Process:** This work was carried out in three stages, in the first one an approach to the script of the semi-structured interview was made, which was applied to an educator, based on its operation, the corresponding changes were made, leaving the final version. In the second stage, the strategies, techniques, and materials for obtaining the data were tested. This test was carried out with two educators from a private kindergarten (one of the first and one of the second grade) in Mexico City.

Once the strategies, techniques, and materials for obtaining the data were tested, the corresponding modifications were made. In the third stage, the definitive procedure was applied. The third stage consisted of two phases, a constant aspect in these was the use of a field diary in which observations, comments on the filmed moments, important events, information that was obtained through informal talks with people who were immersed in the school and which were taken up to complement the subsequent analysis of the data. General aspects common to both phases of the investigation. The memory stimulation and the semi-structured interview were carried out in the teachers' lounge, it should be noted that it was not carried out without interruptions because the teachers were constantly interrupted to request or ask them something. At all times, the researcher ensured the proper technical operation of the video camera and computer. In the first phase, the researcher entered the school context for three days before starting to record, with the aim that the children and staff become familiar with it. In the second phase, she entered two days before, because the children and the teacher were already familiar.

Upon entering the classroom, the researcher introduced herself to the children, saying her name and mentioning that she would accompany them for a few days to see what they do in her classroom and learn from them, and that their teacher would be filmed with a video camera that was showed, they were also asked if they had any questions. The days in which the two phases were videotaped were in which the plan carried out by the educator was applied, of which there are copies and of which she was asked to write what she thought during its elaboration. To carry out the memory stimulation, the educator's workday was recorded for three days; recess and the moments when the teacher left the classroom were not recorded. However, through what he observed, the important aspects that happened during these moments were rescued to ask the educator later. For the selection of the scenes, the researcher relied on the aspects mentioned in the 2011 PEP in relation to personal and social development.

**The following section explains the procedure for each phase.**

**Phase 1.** It was carried out approximately in the middle of the school year. The duration of the work with the educator was five days. The researcher agreed with the teacher to ask her to write down what she thought while doing the weekly planning in relation to personal and social development, these writings were delivered to the researcher, photocopied for further analysis. It was videotaped, later the scenes related to personal and social development were selected. On the fourth day, before starting the school day, memory stimulation was carried out and on the fifth day, the semi-structured interview was carried out.

**Phase 2.** The second phase was carried out approximately at the end of the school year and the duration of the work was four days. The same procedure as in phase one was followed.

### Data analysis

**The procedure for data analysis is as follows (Martínez, 2008):**

- Semi-structured interviews and recall stimulations were transcribed.
- Semi-structured interviews, recall stimulations, writing, and planning were coded.
- It was categorized into thematic units based on the literature on personal and social development, the semi-structured interview, writings, planning, stimulations of memory, that is, classifying through a term or expression that was clear with the content or idea central of each thematic unit.
- The categories were integrated into a broader and more comprehensive one. This was done with the aim of extracting the categories that best explain the phenomenon to be studied, which was done from the literature on personal and social development, the semi-structured interview, writings, planning, and memory stimulations.
- The information from the semi-structured interview, writings, planning, and memory stimulations were placed in each category, according to their content.
- Coincidences were sought between the semi-structured interview, writings, planning, and memory stimulations, to establish the relationship between the theories exposed and in use.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the approach of the theories of action, it is considered that all deliberate behavior is supported by a construct that has a normative character, since it indicates to the subject what he must do to achieve a purpose. The constructs that make up the theories of action are manifested in a set of values, guiding variables, assumptions, beliefs, knowledge, and action strategies that are intended to guide the individual.

The theories of action that were identified in this work represent the mental model that educators possess in relation to personal and social development. These theories are built on beliefs, knowledge, training and experience, mainly institutionalized knowledge. In this case, the participating educators are based on the "Study Program 2011, guide for the educator. Basic Preschool Education"(PEP) 2011 (13). These theories have a normative character, since they indicate to the teacher what they should do in their educational practice, in this case, what they should do to promote personal and social development in preschool children.

**The results found in this work are presented and discussed below.**

### *Categories of theories of action in relation to the educational practice of educators.*

*According to the data analysis, it was identified that the educators are governed by different elements:*

- *Disciplinary knowledge about personal and social development*
- *Influence of the official preschool program*
- *Immediacy of the situation*
- *Knowledge about students*
- *Climate of trust and coexistence*
- *Establishment of rules.*

**Disciplinary knowledge about personal and social development:** Educators show extensive disciplinary knowledge about personal and social development, given that they are professionals who develop in the field of preschool education, which makes it easier for the educator to carry out different strategies for their promotion. In all the results, the great knowledge that the educators possess is shown, as well as part of their training, the official program, and their experience. This knowledge, teachers build and rebuild to make it applicable in their daily work. It includes the aspects to be developed and the way to teach them, which makes it a practical and professionalized knowledge for teaching and learning. According to the educators, personal and social development is oriented towards the adequate development of children and refers to a set of interconnected aspects, such as autonomy, personal identity, self-control, and interpersonal relationships. This development will have an impact on the future life of the students, which is manifested when the first-grade teacher expresses the following:

*"... as long as they are sure of what they do, what they think, what they feel, they will be little vulnerable to dangerous situations in high school ..."*

### *Second grade teacher.*

*"... what we do we will also see reflected in the future ..."*

The strategies used by the educators favor personal and social development and take advantage of daily situations for their promotion. It is important to mention that, although the educators carry out activities to promote personal and social development, they are not always aware that they do it, in addition to being an area that costs them work, the second grade educator stated the following:

*"... sometimes I say ... I worked on this, but not intentionally ... I feel that it is one of the training fields that I find difficult ..."*

In the same way there are times when they do not get involved in the activities, for example, when singing a song as a way of greeting, the third-grade teacher noticed this and stated:

*"... and I did not think that it was important to establish a closer relationship with them ... I did not succeed because, I let them sing alone, I just sang some phrases or a few bits of the song with them, I did not come to say hello what is the purpose of the activity..."*

**Influence of PEP 2011:** In the information collected, the educators argue their way of proceeding based on the official program, which allows us to observe that the educators appropriate it, therefore, the educational practice of the educators is strongly mediated by these official programs, which are a fundamental tool for educational practice, and they are an important element that influences the theories of action of teachers, however, the established contents are adapted to

the characteristics of the context in which they are applied. The adaptation of the official programs could start from the assumption of contributing to carry out more adequate teaching-learning processes, based on the peculiarities of the students and the field in which they are applied. This requires and shows a conceptual and systematization of skills to develop in preschool children. Based on the theories of the teachers' action in relation to the PEP 2011, the educators establish objectives, content to teach, activities and strategies for teaching and learning.

The influence of the PEP 2011 is reflected in autonomy, independence, discipline, self-concept, personal identity, and emotional regulation. For example, in independence, the exposed theories of the action of the educators are oriented to aspects established in the PEP 2011, in the sense that "children take charge of their belongings", since, in it expresses that the child should gradually acquire greater autonomy, through taking responsibility for the belongings that he brings to school. In this sense, Figueroa (2000) points out that the teacher is the one who works the curriculum, that is, the educational practice is a:

"Act of communication in which the teacher is responsible for adapting and giving meanings to the curriculum, for putting students in contact with the content (p. 261)" In this sense, the teacher is indeed an active agent who works to adapt the curriculum to her daily practice. This aspect is related to the exposed theories, since they refer to institutionalized knowledge, that is, they are constructs that are expressed orally or in writing through different documents that regulate or regulate administrative processes, these exposed theories regulate acting of the educators in the classroom.

### Immediacy of the situation

Regarding the immediacy of the situation, a large number of events take place in the classroom that lead the teacher to act in one way or another, even if they are similar situations, the educator can proceed differently, that is, she has different theories in use for similar situations. The preschool teacher links two elements in her work, a theoretical foundation, and the need to respond to everyday situations. The immediacy of the situation was presented in emotional regulation and self-control. A situation showing the above is as follows:

Janet cried at the beginning of the school day, the teacher speaking loudly and with her hands on her waist asked *"who is crying? How unpleasant!"*, In the explanation the teacher argued:

*"I would have approached or would have come like this, why are you crying? More subtle..."*

The above, in relation to what he reflected on, but did not carry out. In the second stage of video recording, a teacher from another group was absent, which is why they divided the children into other groups, therefore, one of them was crying and the teacher approached him and said:  
*"do not cry"*

The explanation he gave to this situation was:

*"I changed, in the previous one with Janet, and now, don't cry ... I'm not going to start yelling at the child who is from another room who doesn't know me well"*

In the teacher's theories in use of first, changing the reaction from one moment to another was not related to the importance of promoting emotional regulation, she attributed her actions to the fact that the child was not from her group and she was not going to yell at him, In this regard, the reflection that he made at first did not resume it, however, what the educator carried out and the explanation he gave, part of his experience, knowledge and the immediacy of the situation. This makes the educator generate her own practice, adapting it to the characteristics of the context in which her work is located; To achieve this, you will have to start from your experience, your beliefs and knowledge regarding teaching, that is, it is not enough to know the formal curriculum, but rather to know how to solve and face various situations that arise in everyday life in the classroom (Figueroa, 2000). Given the above, if you want to influence education, you must work in the programs based on the context, the experience of the teachers, and of course the educational needs of the students.

**Knowledge about students:** Another important element identified in the theories of action, specifically in the theories in use by educators is the knowledge that the teacher has about her students. For example: the first-grade teacher mentions that when one child hits another, children say to their classmates:

*"Don't hit me, angry and with your hands on my waist"*

To which he expressed that this means: *"I don't like that you're hitting me and it bothers me that you're hitting me, so don't hit me anymore"*, He also explained what he says to his students:

*"Now he is going to hit you, see what you feel, then hit him, son, hit him well, as he hit you." "When someone does it badly, they don't have impulse control, for example, Pearl doesn't hit, because they don't do it badly, they don't have impulse control, they can't control themselves, it costs them work, when they come running take off, because they don't wickedly."*

Here it can be seen that the teacher considers that boys who have impulse control, when they hit someone else, act badly, while the girl who does not have impulse control does not do it badly. Therefore, the teacher proceeds in the classroom based on the knowledge she has of her students and the meaning she gives to this knowledge. This knowledge the teacher has acquired through daily interaction with the students and in teaching situations in the classroom, such knowledge makes the teacher have different theories in use for similar situations.

### Climate of trust and coexistence

The teacher is in charge of marking the beginning, the dynamics and the continuity of the school day, so that the above is generated, the teachers consider it important to promote a warm climate to guarantee the fluidity of relationships, of the educator with the students and of the students with their classmates. One of the strategies to create this climate of trust is that all the children wait to start having breakfast at the same time, as presented in the following bullet, with the first-grade teacher:

*"Respect each one of his colleagues, that we all are and we have to start at the same time ... but we do respect each"*

*other, because we are all, we are here and we are all the same and that we should all start at the same time"*

In preschool a breakfast is distributed which includes a milk, a cookie or dried fruit. The previous strategy is also used by the third-grade teacher but focused on the development of "courtesy habits", which contribute to generating a climate of trust. With the first-grade teacher, the theory in use of "courtesy habits" was identified. In one scene the children sang a song to greet each other, to which the teacher explained:

*"... it is to create a warm atmosphere, it is this part of courtesy, that you come to a place and you must say hello"*

The third-grade educator also presented theory in use in relation to "courtesy habits", it should be noted that, performing the same strategy, at the beginning of the day they sing a song:

*"... that greeting activity is more to integrate, for a cordial greeting, I left them, as well as yes, greet each other ... I did not give the importance of establishing a closer relationship with them ... that they understand that when they come to a place to use the greeting as a cordial way... I didn't succeed because I let them sing alone..."*

Another strategy for promoting a climate of trust is "sharing materials". It was observed that the second-grade teacher places the crayons in the middle of the table on a tray:

*"... for everyone to drink, whoever puts them in the middle is so that they know they have to share ..."*

For educators, starting breakfast together and sharing crayons are situations that allow children to establish positive interactions with their peers. Another strategy he uses is that they all start having breakfast at the same time and say "bon appetite":

*"... is the same as entering and greeting us, worrying about the good benefit of the partner, being interested in how my partner is"*

As already mentioned, this strategy is also carried out by the first-grade teacher but focused on promoting respect. In the song for the promotion of courtesy habits, the teacher reflected that it did not contribute to a closer relationship with the children, perhaps because they do it daily that they no longer focus on the objectives of the activities carried out in the preschool.

**Setting rules:** That the child internalizes the rules to act autonomously, without it being necessary for another person to be with him, so that he regulates himself and performs according to the rules established in the different contexts in which he operates, and it is not only to follow and respect rules, but that they are reflected, in relation to the consequences of not following them, for example, with the third grade teacher, it was observed that she carried out an activity asking children *What if there were no rules in the classroom? What do you think the room would be like?* So, they drew that it was dirty, already about that activity they proposed the rules; This activity allows children to reflect on the rules and not just follow them.

The theories exposed of the action of the third-grade educator are manifested in the following bullet:

*"That children are well behaved ... that the child understands that there are external criteria, rules and conventions that regulate their behavior in the different areas in which they participate ..."*

This aspect is reflected in the theories in use of the educator, because she constantly expresses the rules of the classroom, when asked why she does the above, she said:

*"They are introduced to the classroom and the rules, that is, I did not invent them myself ... let's see everyone, let's start with an activity called what would happen if there were no rules in the classroom? What do you think the room would be like? So, they drew that it was dirty, that everything was like that, and on that activity, they proposed the rule"*

Theories in use were also identified with the second-grade teacher. It was observed that he frequently mentions the rules of the group, when asked why, he externalized:

*"The one that initially rules, limits, that there are rules, that for everything there are rules, that to use something you have to put it back in its place ... I always tell them why we do it not because I say ... because that is their place, because everything must be in one place"*

The establishment of rules is related to discipline, which is the ability to control impulses, focus our efforts on achieving a certain goal, they are norms that we follow and that allow us to understand and learn to behave appropriately in different contexts in which we develop. The support of the official 2011 program is observed in the theories of the action of the educators in relation to the discipline. This program mentions that there are criteria, rules and conventions that regulate children's behavior in the different areas in which it participates. In this regard, the official program is the basis on which the teachers base their work. Rules of courtesy are also an element identified in educators' theories of action considering that "they must be carried out in the classroom, school and outside of it." Which is identified in the following bullet from the first-grade teacher:

*"The rules of coexistence in the classroom, the school and outside of it and the habits of courtesy"*

It was observed that the second-grade teacher tells the classroom rules and explains to the children how they should behave to get something:

*"... it is for the respect of the other, children should not hit, nor fight and respect the work of their peers, share and save the material, live together in a healthy environment and in anyone ..."*

The teacher mentioned in this regard:

*"... I feel that it has been important to be emphasizing the rules ... if I mistreat my partner then what will he feel ... if I hit or prick an eye because it will hurt and I would not like to have it done ..."*

As you can see the theories of action govern the actions of educators, these theories are behind what they do in their practice.

## Conclusion

The objective proposed in the present investigation: To analyze the relationship between the exposed theories and the theories in use of the educators in relation to personal and social development in preschool children was accomplished by identifying and establishing categories that describe the theories exposed and in use of the participants. From the results obtained, we can conclude that educators reflect in relation to their educational practice, which may or may not coincide with what is established in the literature, highlighting and taking into consideration that a personal theory is not necessarily correct, good or true, a personal theory is a set of interconnected propositions that have the same referent, the subject of the theory (Argyris and Schön, 1974) (4) and in this case the referent is the preschool educators who participated in this research.

The exposed theories identified are influenced by organizational and institutional documents, it is an official knowledge and the theories in use refer to the action in particular situations determined by experience, the knowledge acquired, through training, the immediacy of the situation and knowledge about people (Argyris and Schön, 1974) (4). Therefore, the theories of action found are related to disciplinary knowledge about personal and social development, influence of the official preschool program, immediacy of the situation, knowledge about students, climate of trust and coexistence, and establishment of rules.

In accordance with the above, educators direct their educational practice based on their theories of action, that is, teachers promote personal and social development in preschool based on what they know about it, which they consider important to promote in children, in their training, in their experience and the curriculum, the above mediated by the context in which it is carried out, beliefs, values, expectations of peers and managers. This research shows a clear relationship between the work of the educators and the educational objectives of the preschool education program. In the results, it was identified that the educators did not allude to any theoretical reference, however, the aspects that emerged in the analysis are part of the 2011 PEP, in this sense and taking the perspective of practical knowledge, it can be said that the educators transform the curriculum in such a way that it is teachable, therefore, they create it and apply it (Elbaz, 1983). According to the PEP 2011 (SEP, 2011) (13) the educator in her reality acts based on her training, knowledge, pedagogical traditions, beliefs regarding what is considered important for children to learn, which leads her to make decisions before and during the school day. Retaking the theories of action allowed us to study what educators think, what they do, the explanation they give to what they do and the reflection on their educational practice, and not assume that what they think is reflected in their actions. Based on the previously explained, it can be concluded that educational work not only requires the application of established programs and didactic sequences, it requires a great creative capacity to recognize the individual characteristics of the students and their educational achievements, from which the educator selects and adapts the content for her teaching and designs the most appropriate

strategies to achieve the purposes (SEP, 2003). The present work contributes to the field of knowledge of the theories of action in the preschool context, being a little studied level, offering the opportunity to study what the educator thinks, says, does and reflects regarding her educational practice. It is expected that what educators do daily in their daily practice will be communicated and taken up by other teachers in their work, as well as that the processes underlying educational practice are considered in the educational reforms that are carried out.

## Abbreviations

**PEP:** Study Program 2011, guide for the educator. Basic Preschool Education.

**SEP:** Basic Education Secretariat

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