

Models for affective and loving relationships in Brazilian youth: An analysis based on the Thought Organization Models Theory

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Resumo: O presente artigo apresenta os resultados de uma pesquisa que teve por objetivo identificar e analisar como jovens, estudantes de Ensino Médio, organizam o pensamento ao analisar um conflito de conteúdo afetivo-amoroso. Participaram da pesquisa 120 jovens, sendo 60 do sexo masculino e 60 do sexo feminino. A análise dos dados, realizada a partir dos aportes da Teoria dos Modelos Organizadores do Pensamento, nos revelou seis Modelos Organizadores, nos quais verificamos diferentes compreensões sobre as relações afetivo-amorosas: variando entre uma compreensão mais romântica e idealizada, até uma compreensão de que o amor depende de elementos como o diálogo e a autorreflexão. Nos limites deste artigo, focaremos a análise em dois modelos organizadores buscando compreender como as formas de organizar o pensamento pelos sujeitos investigados estiveram ligadas a antigas e/ou novas concepções sobre as relações afetivo-amorosas. Por fim, encerraremos explicitando as implicações do trabalho para o campo educacional.

Palavras Chave: relações afetivo-amorosas, juventude, Teoria dos Modelos Organizadores do Pensamento.

Abstract: This article presents the results of a survey that aimed to identify and analyze how young high school students organize thoughts when analyzing a conflict involving content related to affection and love. A total of 120 young people, including 60 males and 60 females, participated in the survey. The data analysis was performed based on the contributions of the Thought Organization Models Theory and revealed six Organization Models being used. Different understandings of affective and loving relationships were found in these models, ranging from a more romantic and idealized understanding to an understanding that love depends on elements such as dialogue and self-reflection. Within the limits of this article, we focus on the analysis of two organizational models to understand how the ways of organizing thought on the subjects investigated have been linked to old and/or new concepts concerning affective and loving relationships. Finally, we conclude by explaining the implications of the work for the educational field.

Keywords: loving relationships, youth, Thought Organization Models Theory.

Introduction

Despite the recent introduction of love as a study object in the social sciences,³ the number of studies that have analyzed romantic love, in particular, is already very significant (SASTRE, MORENO, 2010; FELIPE, 2007; GIDDENS, 1992).

Although there is no consensus on the origins of this type of love, the influence of the bourgeois revolutions is generally acknowledged because they encouraged the ideas of individual freedom and allowed marriage to no longer be a family choice, as had prevailed from antiquity until the eighteenth century (ARAÚJO, 2002). Indeed, it was only in the eighteenth century that love and sexuality entered into marriage, given that, hitherto, marriage had been viewed as a realm for ensuring reproduction (ARAÚJO, 2002).

These transformations, which at first glance are positive, did not occur without contradictions. One example is the widespread belief that it is only possible to feel

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³ According to Neves (2007), there was almost an absence of scientific investigations on subjects related to love until the mid 1970s – the topic was even referred to as unscientific, and for this reason, it had a late introduction into the social sciences and the humanities.

fulfilled and happy with a loving partner, as revealed by popular expressions such as "other half" and "soulmate" (FELIPE, 2007).

According to Montserrat Moreno and Genoveva Sastre (2010), romantic love seeks to perpetuate the characteristic that marks the beginning of romantic relationships: passion. During this phase, the fascination and happiness that passion brings "[...] make you realize that the person you love is unique and irreplaceable, *and only the qualities stand out*" (MORENO; SASTRE, 2010, p. 113, emphasis and translation ours). The implication is that the subject sees only what he or she wants to see in the partner. Consequently, the conflicts that arise from such logic typically do not take long to appear because, instead of the couple committing to the creation of a common history, each person assumes an individual perspective.

Thus, the authors point to the need to reject the understanding that love only belongs to the realm of feelings and does not involve rationality. The reason is that it has been mistakenly understood that love is not something that one can decide upon, given that it belongs only to the realm of affection, in which reason cannot intervene (MORENO; SASTRE, 2010).

The risks of such an understanding – of love as an element that belongs exclusively to the sentimental domain – are manifested in the permissiveness that is granted to experience love as an unconditional and omnipotent phenomenon. It is understood that expressing love produces sensations that one is able to do everything, whether this involves just or unjust actions. The beloved becomes supremely valued, and everything else is secondary (MORENO; SASTRE, 2010, p. 112).

Youth and relationships of affection and love

Based on the understanding that youth is a category that is constructed from social, cultural, and historical influences (OZELLA, AGUIAR, 2008; SPOSITO, CARRANO, 2003; MELUCCI, 1997), we note the need to understand the historical transformations in the manner in which young people experience relationships of affection and love. Therefore, we focus our analysis on the Brazilian context.

As Azevedo (1986) observes, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Brazil, unions were based on economic arrangements. Thus, as noted by Mary Del Priore (2006), although, in Europe, the ideal of romantic love had been present since the eighteenth century, in Brazil, this type of ideal was late in arriving.

However, around the 1930s, the possibility of choosing a partner emerged among the youth of the Brazilian elite. It was a process known as *footing* and was based on flirting, that is, the exchange of glances, smiles, and gestures such as winks (DEL PRIORE, 2006; SILVA, 2002; AZEVEDO, 1986). As Silva (2002) explains,

In *footing*, the girls, walking side-by-side and arm-in-arm with their female friends, assessed their types of interest, attempted to decipher their exterior signals and symbols, compared the boys, and established preliminary exploratory relations of trust with them before taking any time to discuss or broker a future relationship or even a less serious commitment [...] (SILVA, 2002, p. 29).

Choosing a partner through *footing* was significant in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s (SILVA, 2002; AZEVEDO, 1986).

Subsequently, the "sexual revolution", experienced in the 1960s and 1970s, marked the idea of "free love" and sex without repression. Such a revolution was possible due to female emancipation and the popularization of contraceptive methods,

which liberated women from the inevitability of maternity and reduced concerns about sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS and syphilis.

However, it should be noted that in Brazil, the transformations in the manner in which love, sexuality, and marriage are experienced did not occur suddenly. On the contrary, a long trajectory was necessary before young people had greater power to choose their own partners and before sexuality was viewed and experienced with greater freedom. Regardless, it is undeniable that the so-called "sexual revolution" spurred significant changes.

Accordingly, one of the most recent changes in the manner in which relationships involving affection, especially (although not exclusively) among young people, are experienced is the "*ficar*" [which hereafter is referred to as "hookup"]. This phenomenon, which emerged in the 1980s, is regarded as a form of relationship that, although incorporating the game of looks and smiles at the moment of amorous conquest, involves more intense bodily experiences than those experienced in the *footing* of the 1930s to 1950s. The "hookup" is considered to be a fast relationship that can last one or a few nights and may involve kissing, fondling, and progression to sexual intercourse.

Most of the scholars who have dedicated themselves to investigating the "hookup" consider that, unlike dating – which is understood to be a form of pre-nuptial relationship with well-defined rules and in which those who are involved in it generally plan the future together (DE JESUS, 2005) – the "hookup" is characterized by the absence of commitment and exclusivity of one individual to another as well as by the absence of rules (JUSTO, 2005; CHAVES, 2003). Thus, although dating is characterized by continuity in the relationship, the "hookup" is characterized by relationships that occur in specific situations that typically last for only a few hours during nights of parties and fun (JUSTO, 2005).

An important basis for many studies on the "hookup" is the work by Bauman (2004) titled *Amor líquido: sobre a fragilidade dos laços humanos* [*Liquid Love: On the Frailty of Human Bonds*]. Anchored in this contribution, some works developed in the Brazilian context have sought to critically analyze the adverse effects of ephemeral relationships. As Bauman (2004) observes, amorous bonds become more fragile and ephemeral in line with the logic of consumer society. However, the author informs that this does not mean that people no longer crave more lasting relationships or that they do not have the ideal of eternal love; instead relationships have come to be governed by the logic of the market. Thus, faced with the risks of affective relationships, the love life is administered as though it was a market investment.

Based on the criticism of the ephemerality of affective relationships, it is observed that the "hookup" is mostly viewed in a negative manner, serving as a type of experience involving the disposability of the other person and configured as a relationship that is both appropriate for and suitable to contemporary society, which is marked by temporary and ephemeral relationships.

Old and new understandings of relationships of affection and love: from romantic love to confluent love?

The formulations of Anthony Giddens (1992), in *The Transformation of Intimacy*, have become widely known. For this author, romantic love has been losing its place in modern society. Emerging from this process is a type of love referred to by Giddens (1992) as *confluent love*, which breaks from the idea of eternal love, that is, from the "until death do you part" that marked romantic love. The author believes that relationships in contemporary society have come to involve more dialogue, respect,

trust, and negotiation between the couple, thus differing from processes that had previously pre-determined the affection, love, and sex in individuals' lives. According to the author, in confluent love, respect, freedom, and trust are constantly negotiated, and the ties that bind the couple can be undone at any moment (GIDDENS, 1992).

However, despite the understanding of Giddens (1992), the change from romantic love to confluent love does not occur automatically. Thus, we consider it important to take note of the considerations of Justo (2005). For this author, teenagers are the group most affected by the tensions between old and new concepts of love: on the one hand, they still envision the ideals of romantic love, driven by the promise of the security and durability of the relationship; and on the other hand, confluent love also attracts them, given that it leads to the possibility of independence and autonomy.

For Justo (2005), in this unresolved tension, the "hookup" continues to be a space for the reproduction of old inequalities between males and females. According to the author, "it is observed among some adolescents, notably among girls (for a change), that there is a reproachful tone toward those who 'hook up' often, especially if this 'hookup' includes sexual relations" (JUSTO, 2005, p. 74).

In a convergent sense, we highlight the data presented by Stengel (2003), who, based on investigation, observes that although boys were not afraid to "hook up" with various girls, many of them unknown, by contrast, the young females, although having similar attitudes, carried the feeling of guilt and shame: "[...] for women, hooking up with an unknown person has a negative moral value. A person who does not value herself will hook up with anyone" (STENGEL, 2003, p. 65).

Starting from these considerations, the research that we present in this article seeks to identify and analyze how young people organize their thought when analyzing a conflict that involves content related to affection and love. Therefore, we move to the description of the methodology that guides the investigation.

The Thought Organization Models Theory

The reality construction process depends on how we assimilate the characteristics of the outside world to convert it as part of our cognitive system. This process does not occur uniformly because it is influenced by social, affective, and cognitive elements (MORENO; SASTRE, 2010). Therefore, it is not a mere copy of the outside world, given that each subject *selects certain elements* of reality, *assigns meanings* to these elements, and establishes *implications* between the abstracted elements and the meanings assigned (MORENO, SASTRE, 2010; MORENO et al., 1999).

When selecting the elements, the starting point is the observable reality; however, the subject can select data that are not in the outside world but that are the fruits of his or her inferences, fantasies, beliefs, and imagination. Thus, the role of inference and imagination in this process is recognized, given that the subject can select elements that do not figure in the reality. It is therefore necessary to bear in mind that there are elements of reality that are not contemplated in the organization model, just as there could also be elements contained in the organization model but that do not figure in reality (TIMON, SASTRE, 2003; MORENO et al., 1999).

In the process of organizing and establishing implications between the elements abstracted and the meanings attributed, the subject seeks to establish an internal coherence through the relationships established between the elements he/she selected and an external coherence that is capable of representing the real world. In this process, it is important to note that, although faced with the same fact, subjects can assume different understandings, leading them to develop different models – the possibility of ordering the elements that they are composed of is not infinite, given certain

compatibility with the objective world. This does not therefore mean ignoring objective reality but rather assuming it to be a regulating element (MORENO, et al., 1999).

Participants

A total of 120 young people (60 males and 60 females) between 15 and 17 years of age participated in the study, as shown in Table 1. These subjects were students at a public high school located in the west zone of the municipality of São Paulo (Brazil).

Table 1. Distribution of the study participants according to gender and age.⁴

Age	Male	Female	Total
15 years old	20	20	40
16 years old	20	20	40
17 years old	20	20	40
Total	60	60	120

Methodological instrument

To elaborate a conflict that would encompass relevant content related to relationships of affection and love among young people, as a first step, we decided to ask 60 young people from the school studied to write an essay about the experiences of affection and love that have had an impact on them. Based on this procedure, the defined conflict sought to be similar to content that was considered to be important for the young people. Thus, one of the issues highlighted in these essays was that the subjects reported specific experiences marked by suffering due to unrequited feelings. Therefore, we took such data to be significant, and we considered it in the development of our survey instrument. From this process, the instrument developed was structured as shown in Appendix A and Appendix B.

Procedures

To conduct the survey, we ensured compliance with the rules governing research with human subjects, and we guaranteed, above all else, anonymity and free, voluntary, and consensual participation.

Starting from this process, we applied the proposed conflict. The female version (Appendix A) was distributed among the female participants, and the male version (Appendix B) was distributed among the male participants. The texts and the questions (for both the male and female versions) were read to the survey participants. They were instructed to read the text once more individually and to answer in writing the four questions presented, which are as follows:

1. Do you think that Fabiane/Pedro likes Pedro/Fabiane? Why? Explain your response in detail.
2. Do you think that Pedro/Fabiane likes Fabiane/Pedro? Why? Explain your response in detail.

⁴ Although we divided the sample into subjects of 15, 16, and 17 years of age, we did not consider the age variable to be an element for analysis, given that the ages are very similar. This distribution only assisted us in the organization of our sample.

3. Why do you think Fabiane and Pedro have drifted apart? Explain your response in detail.

4. If Fabiane/Pedro was your best friend, what advice would you give her/him? Explain your response in detail.

Thought Organization Models identified in the survey

The data analysis identified six thought organization models⁵. Given the space limits of this article, we opted to examine in more detail the reflections regarding models 1 and 6 and to briefly describe models 2, 3, 4, and 5.

We note that question 3 is not included in the analysis because, during the investigation, we found that it did not significantly change the manner in which the subjects positioned themselves within the conflict. Thus, we focused on questions 1, 2, and 4.

Model 1: Investment in the relationship between Fabiane/Pedro and Pedro/Fabiane

The participants who compose model 1 advised in favor of investing in the relationship between the first two characters, that is, between Fabiane/Pedro and Pedro/Fabiane. Accordingly, the subjects advised the first character to "chase after", "fight for", "do what the heart commands", and "never give up" on "true love".

We note that the subjects in this model did not mention the third character in the conflict when advising to invest in the relationship between the first and the second character. The investment in the relationship between these characters appeared as though there was not a third person involved in the story. However, this does not mean that the subjects did not make reference to this third character. In questions 1 and 2, in some cases, the character appeared in the background, assuming a role of someone who is blocking the relationship between Fabiane/Pedro and Pedro/Fabiane and/or who only emerges in the story with the task of assisting the first character to forget the second.

Example:

17-year-old subject, female

Question 1: Yes, Fabiane likes Pedro because she is dating another person just to try to forget him.

Question 2: Pedro does not like Fabiane because, if he liked her, he would have done everything to get back with her.

Question 4: My grandmother always said to me that we should like those who like us, but it's not quite like that; if you don't like the person you are with, then break up with that person, and go after your true love.

Model 2: "Hookup" and "pegar" [which hereafter is referred to as "pickup"]

In this model, the subjects advised in favor of not investing in very serious relationships, such as dating, because they consider the "hookup" and the "pickup" to be better.

⁵ In the doctoral research on which this article is based as well as in the organization models, submodels were also identified to highlight the non-regularities within the same model. However, in this article, we choose not to delve into the analysis of these submodels.

We note that, as in model 1, the participants of model 2 did not abstract the third character of the conflict and therefore did not mention him/her.

Example:

15-year-old subject, male

Question 1: *I believe that Pedro thinks he likes Fabiane, but actually, Pedro liked hooking up with her and wanted to hook up again, but he did not genuinely like her, he just wanted to hook up so he wouldn't get rusty.*

Question 2: *I think that Fabiane does not like Pedro because, at a party, you go to have fun and kiss someone on the lips; so, it doesn't matter who you hook up with. The time they spent together was just to pass time.*

Question 4: *The advice I would give him is: don't fall in love. As a teenager, you should just have fun, hook up with plenty of people, maybe even date, but nothing too serious. Going steady, I think, is only for when you are an adult.*

Model 3: Caring for the third character

In this model, the subjects attributed a significant role to the third character in the resolution of the conflict presented, considering him/her to be a person who deserves consideration to not be upset, hurt, and/or misled amid the conflict of affection and love between Fabiane/Pedro and Pedro/Fabiane. Thus, distinct from models 1 and 2, the third character appeared in a meaningful manner in the resolution of the conflict.

Example:

16-year-old subject, female

Question 1: *In my opinion, yes. Because if she believes that Pedro is the true love of her life, she is only with the other guy to forget about him.*

Question 2: *Yes, because, for me, they only drifted apart because the relationship cooled, not because they liked another person more.*

Question 4: *I would say to her to not hook up with someone else to try to forget Pedro because you don't forget about a person by misleading another. I would also tell her to try to talk to Pedro to see what happens.*

Model 4: Forgetting the second character

All of the subjects who are part of model 4 thought that the first character in the conflict should forget the second. In this model, the subjects abstracted the following data from the conflict "*the true love of one's life*", and they did so critically, questioning idealized love.

We also highlight that in model 4 as well as in models 1 and 2, the subjects did not abstract the third character and therefore did not mention him/her.

Example:

16-year-old subject, female

Question 1: *Yes, because she still thinks about Pedro; however, she is with another boy to try to forget about him.*

Question 2: *No, because he hooks up with lots of girls from school, and he hooked up with her at a party, like, very fast, without thinking about it clearly.*

Question 4: *Don't delude yourself with people that just make you suffer. Find someone who genuinely wants you.*

Model 5: Investment in the relationship with the third character

In model 5, as in model 4, the participants abstracted the following data from the conflict "*the true love of one's life*", and they criticized and questioned idealized love.

In this model, in addition to the subjects advising the first character to forget about the second, they also advised that this character should invest in the relationship with the third person. However, in this model, the third character appears as a person who has the potential to be loved/wanted by the first person. Thus, we noted that, unlike the previous model, the subjects of model 5 abstracted the third character, considering him/her in the resolution of the conflict presented.

Example:

15-year-old subject, female

Question 1: *I think so because if she didn't like him, the moment that someone appeared who likes and respects her, she would soon forget Pedro if she didn't like him.*

Question 2: *I don't think so. If he liked her, he would chase after her, or during the 2-month relationship, he would have made it work.*

Question 4: *Take advantage of the opportunity that you have to be happy with someone who genuinely likes you. If Pedro liked you, you'd be together, not apart. Think about this, and do what you think is going to help you instead of pining for someone.*

Model 6: Self-reflection and dialogue as factors that help in the resolution of the conflict presented

In this model, as in models 4 and 5, the subjects abstracted the given "*true love of one's life*" and questioned it. In particular, such questioning was conducted starting from the abstraction of the "time of relationship between the characters" factor because the subjects questioned the concept of "love at first sight", which occurs without dialogue, without knowledge of the other person, and without the self-reflection that provides the knowledge of oneself. Thus, the subjects that compose model 6 pointed to the need for "conversations" between the characters and questions about the feelings and attitudes of those involved in the conflict, especially between Fabiane/Pedro and Pedro/Fabiane.

Example:

17-year-old subject, female

Question 1: *Maybe she is thinking that he is the true love of her life because, from the first moment she saw him, she fell in love. This idea of getting to know someone in order to forget another is full of holes because she will look for the personality of Pedro in him. She may even like Pedro, but love, no. Love is something far beyond*

hooking up a few times and then cooling the relationship "[...] love is patient, it is kind, it does not burn in envy or rancor, it is compassionate, cheerful [...]", you cannot compare love with infatuation. She does not love Pedro and much less this boy who she's been with for 7 months. But until she finds out that it is not love, it will be a big headache for her parents.

Question 2: *It's possible she may like him. Because liking is not loving, it is having affection, feeling something good in relation to the person. To like is not to hate. He did not demonstrate anger toward her or reject her, so for him, it's, like, whatever.*

Question 4: *First, I would tell her to stop being dramatic because her feelings have barely had time to develop and she is already filling herself with future traumas in relation to "UNREQUITED LOVE", and then I would ask her to get to know herself better and give herself some time, and if the foolishness of "crying" because of a man continued, then I would send her to a psychologist before she gets symptoms of neediness, for which there will be nobody to support her because of low self-esteem.*

Table 2 shows the number of survey participants in each of the models:

Table 2. Distribution of the survey participants in the models according to gender.

MODEL	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
	Male	Female	Total
Model 1	33 (27.5)	20 (16.7)	53 (44.2)
Model 2	7 (5.8)	1 (0.8)	8 (6.7)
Model 3	3 (2.5)	16 (13.3)	19 (15.8)
Model 4	12 (10)	3 (2.5)	15 (12.5)
Model 5	2 (1.7)	6 (5.0)	8 (6.7)
Model 6	5 (4.2)	12 (10.0)	17 (14.2)
TOTAL	60 (50)	60 (50)	120 (100)

n = absolute frequency; % = percentage

Discussion

In model 1, which had the largest number of participants (53 subjects), the implication between the elements abstracted and the meanings attributed was the investment in the relationship between the first and second characters of the conflict. In this model, we find the concept of *romantic love*.

In this model, the subjects did not criticize the fact that the first character considers the second character to be "the true love of his/her life", and they advised the first character to invest in the relationship with the second character and to fight for and "chase after" the person.

At this point, we note that according to Moreno and Sastre (2010), love must involve both affective and rational elements. Thus, we return to these authors' critical considerations of the understanding that loving is not a voluntary act and therefore does not allow for decisions by and intervention from the subject (MORENO; SASTRE, 2010, p. 112). We draw attention to this criticism because in the first model, love appears as a natural and instinctive phenomenon that occurs without the influence of reason. Therefore, it is not a process that can be constructed but is something that occurs without the subject's being able to effectively intervene and choose.

This phenomenon is observed in the following answer to Question 1 from one of the survey participants who is part of model 1:

15-year-old subject, male

Question 1: Yes, because he feels that he likes her; even though they are apart, he cannot get her out of his mind. Pedro, you have to chase after your true "love" because love cannot be built; you can get used to the person, but love cannot be built.

We also highlight the criticism from the aforementioned authors about the idea of unconditional love, which considers the fact that if a person actually loves someone, then it does not matter what the person receiving the love does and the relationship should continue to be pursued.

As explained above, the implication between the elements abstracted and the meanings attributed in model 1 was the investment in the relationship between Fabiane/Pedro and Pedro/Fabiane. To express this attitude, we found that the subjects mainly used the expression "chase after".

Some subjects advised in favor of investing in the relationship between the first two characters, even though it is a relationship in which there are unrequited positive feelings. The following is an example:

15-year-old subject, female

Question 1: Deep down, I don't think so because, when a person likes another, he/she fights for this love to the end, even if the love is unrequited.

Regarding the analysis of model 6, which consists of 17 survey participants, the implication between elements abstracted and meanings attributed was that the first character should reflect on the feelings and attitudes in relation to the second and third characters. The subjects of this model believed that *love requires time, dialogue, knowledge of the partner, and self-reflection*. This finding led us to return to the

concept of *confluent love* proposed by Giddens (1992) because this author places dialogue as a central element for experiencing amorous relationships in contemporary society. According to this author, this type of love – confluent love – requires constant negotiation between partners, that is, a negotiation based on respect for the freedom of those involved.

With regard to how the subjects of this model sought to resolve the conflict presented, it was observed that they considered a larger number of elements than the subjects who were part of the other models. For this reason, we understand that they show us a broader and more complex view of relationships that involve affection and love.

Thus, based on these points, it is important to highlight that, although a simpler method of solving the proposed conflict was observed in model 1 because the subjects considered only the affective elements, in model 6, we found a link between the affective and cognitive elements.

Finally, we emphasize that our data seem to show that the strength of ideal romantic love is still significant. Indeed, we found that model 1 alone included almost half of the survey participants. Moreover, it is worth highlighting that there were a greater number of male subjects in this model, which contradicts some studies that claim that this ideal resonates more significantly in the female universe (GIDDENS, 1992; NEVES, 2007).

Regardless, we believe that these data deserve a broader reading. Accordingly, it is worth noting that in the case of our survey instrument, the separation of the characters of Fabiane/Pedro and Pedro/Fabiane plays an important role, which, in our opinion, cannot be overlooked. Consequently, one of the questions we can suggest is that the concept of romantic love, in the case of our survey, seems to be related to the difficulty of accepting the end of the relationship, which was stated more significantly by the male subjects.

Possible implications of the study for the educational field

In the educational field, little or almost nothing about feelings and affections is reflected in the classroom, either with or among the young people experiencing the first intense moments of choices involving affection, love, and sex. As Felipe (2007) reports, what is generally found in everyday school life is a prescriptive approach that is more closely related to prevention – seeking to avoid early pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases – and little is designed to effectively question, guide, and reflect on the students' choices and experiences involving affection and love. Therefore, it is a biological approach, limited to aspects regarding reproduction.

Thus, we believe that our work points to the importance of bringing the discussion about affectivity as a topic to be addressed pedagogically in the classroom. Accordingly, in line with Sastre and Moreno (2002) and Moreno (1999), we believe that a methodological strategy – to take feelings and emotions as a subject to be studied – is the proposition for conflict resolution because it allows the mobilization of both cognitive and affective aspects. As noted by the authors, one possibility is to work starting with the conflicts of the students themselves, based on concrete facts in their lives, thereby allowing a reflection on their feelings, their values, their desires, their thoughts, and their possibilities for action in the midst of the situation reported. Therefore, it is not about imposing a prompt response to conflict but rather to encourage resolution strategies to be reflected upon and recommended by the students.

Bearing this in mind, feelings can be worked on as a cross-cutting theme, passing through the traditional content. Accordingly, as Arantes (2003) observes, to accept such a proposition means to provide training in ethics and citizenship because such training allows students to think about a more just and united society as they come to reflect on conflicts and how to solve them without violence. Therefore, it is about learning to manage one's own feelings and emotions and knowing how to struggle for one's own happiness and for the happiness of others.

Therefore, we conclude by emphasizing the need for work in school education that addresses, in addition to cognitive aspects, the affective dimension, thus enabling students to learn about how to address their feelings. Bearing this in mind, we understand that, as our data reveal, one of the important issues to be worked on in the classroom is relationships of affection and love among young people.

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APPENDIX A

FEMALE VERSION

Fabiane met Pedro earlier this year when they began studying at the same school and were introduced by his cousin, Júlia. Fabiane was immediately fascinated by Pedro. Several girls from school wanted to hook up with Pedro, which is why Fabiane thought she had no chance.

At a party, Pedro approached Fabiane, they kissed, and Fabiane experienced a special moment. After that day, they hooked up a few more times, but after two months, the relationship cooled, and they drifted apart.

Fabiane is trying to forget Pedro with a boy who has shown that he likes her a lot and respects her very much. This relationship has already lasted seven months, but Fabiane believes that the true love of her life is Pedro.

APPENDIX B

MALE VERSION

Pedro met Fabiane earlier this year when they began studying at the same school and were introduced by his cousin, Júlia. He was fascinated immediately by Fabiane. Several boys from school wanted to hook up with Fabiane, which is why Pedro thought he had no chance.

At a party, Fabiane approached Pedro, they kissed, and Pedro experienced a special moment. After that day, they hooked up a few more times, but after two months, the relationship cooled, and they drifted apart.

Pedro is trying to forget Fabiane with a girl who has shown that she likes him a lot and respects him very much. This relationship has already lasted seven months, but Pedro believes that the true love of his life is Fabiane.

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