FAMILY PARTICIPATION FROM THE STANDPOINT OF STUDENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Maria Antonia Gomila Grau, University of the Balearic Islands, Spain
Belén Pascual Barrio, University of the Balearic Islands, Spain
Lluís Ballester Brage, University of the Balearic Islands, Spain

Inclusion and democracy are the principles under which the educative model must be constructed to guarantee the educative success of children in the society. In this model, the collaborative work among family, school and community is a key element, and the families participation in the school is the first step to make it possible. At secondary level, families participation in the school undergoes to a significant decrease. The variables usually attributed to this scant participation are the lack of time, interest or motivation. However, several studies (Comer and Haynes, 1992, Comer at al. 1999) show that, along with socio-economic circumstances, the dearth of relations between families and schools is highly determined by factors linked to the ways in which these relations are conceived and represented. Along with social and economic circumstances some of these factors are: ignorance of the participation ways, fear of not being well received, feeling of intimidation when dealing with teachers, school practices unsuited to the diversity of families, cultural and language barriers, lack of listening, type of language used and lack of teacher training in collaborative work with families.

Relation, communication and cooperation between family and school are considered key action areas in teacher training curricula, especially for secondary school. However, there are still symbolic barriers coming from historical dynamics of the teachers academic formation in Spain, too focused on the knowledge and less in the methodology and in the ways of knowledge transmission.

This paper analyses how the process of construction of social representations and attitudes towards the family works, focusing on how teachers perceive the families’ roles and their own role in the youngsters education process. By analysing the discourses of teachers in their training course at the University of Balearic Islands, we intent to observe the institutional barriers that teachers in secondary level have to

---

1 The Master’s in Teacher Training at the UIB includes a course entitled “Society, Family and Education”. The pivotal discussion points are:
- The collaborative and cooperative relationship between family and schools
- Stereotypes and prejudices in schools
- Co-existence and inclusion in schools
- Strategies for enhancing participation and engaging families
- Immigration and co-existence in secondary schools
face up in their training process, and formulate intervention strategies to improve their attitudes toward family involvement.

Keywords:
secondary education, family involvement, school-family relationship.

References:

