

Vulnerable students and the construction of the concept of future self as an element of protection

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Abstract

This contribution is a part of an ongoing action research initiative involving teachers and secondary school students. The primary objective is to experiment with actions that counter educational risks and enhance the inclusion and social participation of students within schools. Specifically, the project aims to explore the practices, policies, and strategies that teachers can employ to boost participation, foster inclusion, and prevent early school dropout.

The initial phase of the project included distributing two questionnaires – one for teachers and one for students. Schools participating in the project signed a research protocol, outlining the various research phases. The student questionnaire, completed online, delves into factors influencing academic success, such as well-being, school participation, and the construction of the "future self." This paper focuses on presenting data related to the dimensions of the "future self."

The theoretical construct of the "possible self" is crucial in shaping students' individual choices and motivating them to learn about their future. Qualitative analysis of responses from 500 students indicates that, overall, they have not developed a well-defined idea of their future selves. Approximately 22.4% envision themselves in the workforce, 12% express a desire to complete their studies, 12% aspire to attend university, and 21% are unable to provide a specific response. Effective guidance practices should consider the image students have of their future selves, encompassing both desirable and undesirable life paths.

Keywords: future self, early school leaving, vulnerability, educational risk, school success