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CHILD AND TEENAGER PSYCHOPEDAGOGICAL COUNSELLING. LEARNING COMPETENCY

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Abstract: *Child and teenager psychopedagogical counselling is represented by an ensemble of activities described in the school counsellor's personal working sheet. In my personal opinion, psychopedagogical counselling is centred on developing a learning competency (to learn about ones self and about the others, the final result being social adaptation).*

Keywords: *psychopedagogical counselling, educational counselling, school counsellor.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Counselling in all its forms has its own development path in a theoretical and in a practical plan, gaining its own identity. Psychological counselling is the most common counselling form and it is delimited from psychology; for example, an analysis of the professional development suppliers of the Romanian Psychologists College (C.O.P.S.I.) shows that more professional associations of professional development in psychotherapy have accredited programs for psychological counselling, with a minimum duration of 4 years, programs which are different from a formation in psychology. In Europe, a professional development in psychological counselling may last from a few months to a few years.

The concept of *counselling* includes different forms as: psychological counselling, educational counselling, pastoral counselling etc. Counselling is often described as being "spoken therapy" by which the counsellor offers clients time and space to explore their problems, insuring the client of his confidentiality. [5]

Differences between psychological counselling and other forms of counselling have been presented by Culley and Bond (2004) [2],

according to the following criteria: therapist, therapist professional development, client and its variables, working place etc. The definition of counselling is difficult to realize due to the numerous activities it includes, the most representative activities for counselling being the following [4]:

- the specific communication form based on a contract;
- the help offered without judging the client;
- the creation of a relation in which a person helps another one;
- the offering of support to people in order to solve their problems;
- the client's reconsidering as a unique person etc.

Educational counselling represents the process of orientation-learning with an accessibility for educational subjects (pupils, students, adults who are learning) and for their educational partners (parents, teachers, employers), to improve their abilities with the most efficient educational methods, techniques and problem solving procedures [6].

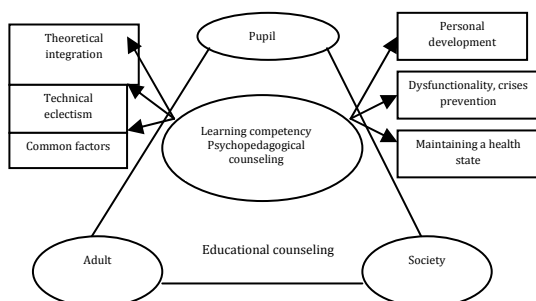
At the level of a common perception, through education counselling we understand the help a subject – pupil – receives from an authorized person in order to maintain health, to enter a

personal development plan, to learn how to face problematic situations and to avoid what could harm him. After a general analysis we can observe that educational counselling is not over for that pupil (young person) when studies are finished. The ending of his studies allows the observation of an eventual ending for his formal education, and for most people, it may represent the development of a permanent educational content. Each person brings, more or less, his contribution to the development of the society he lives in by his own competencies [3].

The individual is not the only one involved in the learning process. The society is also a part of this process. Thus the need for educational counselling doesn't belong only to the individual who is learning, the need for educational counselling also exist at the society level, being represented by its form of social educational counselling. Social educational counselling may represent the attribute of social pedagogy.

In a more general belief, the clients of educational counselling are: the child, the adult and the society; in a more restricted belief, psychopedagogical counselling is represented by educational counselling that has as clients: the child, the teenager and the young. Thus, psychopedagogical counselling is the initial form of counselling practices until individual becomes of age. Learning is the basic activity of human kind and the competency to learn is indispensable to humans and to our society. From this perspective, educational counselling represents a basic step in the formation, cultivation and practicing of the learning competency, not only for the pupil in the classical acknowledgment, but also for the social adult (adults' educational counselling, social educational counselling). See Fig. 1

Fig. 1 - Graphic representation of psychopedagogical and educational. Drobot, 2009



2. PSYCHOPEDAGOGICAL COUNSELING AND THE LEARNING COMPENCY

Learning, as a basic human activity has its proper adaptative purpose. The learning product is

represented by an "ensemble of (intellectual and psycho-motor) habits, cognitive strategies, information strategies, logical strategies (notions, judgments, reasoning, principles, laws) and cognitive attitudes objected in specific studies, usually included in (pre)school programs and (post)university programs [1].

The learning process is influenced by internal and external factors. Learning internal factors have a biological nature (age, sex, mental development, health) and a psychological nature (intellectual development, life style, cognitive capacity, affective attitude and motivational attitude). The learning external factors refer to: a formal and curricular organization (curriculum design), the methodology of teaching-learning-evaluation, these being also mentioned in specific pedagogical documents. In the same category of external learning factors we may also include the direct and indirect action of socio-cultural environments (family, cultural institutions, political institutions, economic agents, representatives of the national educational community, of the territorial community and of the local one). Being an activity, learning is also specific to the subject (client) in counselling or therapy. The client learns, being guided by his counsellor-therapist, so that he will be able to solve or ameliorate his problems and to eliminate the difficulties discovered in front of the fulfilling of his objectives. In other words, learning through counselling or therapy, the client (child or adult) is able to form, develop and exercise his competencies [3].

This competency represents the capacity to truly face situations, to fulfil the tasks received, being an ensemble of dispositions. Personality is connected to knowledge with the help of these competencies and through learning the individual develops his personality and learns more things that will be used during his lifetime.

Nowadays kindergartens and schools, by trying to solve more and more new appeared problems, have alienated from one of their essential roles "learning how to learn". Without "learning how to learn" the child finds it difficult to learn using the competency "to learn how to be in order to learn how to become".

Educational counselling used on a child during the effort of "learning how to learn" competency formation and development represents a great challenge for the education specialist. In order to make the discussion easier we will use the abbreviation *learning competency* instead of the "learning how to learn" competency. In reaching his objectives of the intervention plan, the educational counsellor (school psychologist) will keep in mind the learning competency of his client,



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but also of the client's parents and family. The educational demarche will be a strategic one, but a clear map will be difficult to conceive. Methodological landmarks may be offered, by keeping in mind the principles of counselling and therapy. The counsellor won't select the intervention techniques and methods randomly, before all, it is necessary that he respects the principles of functional flexibility, thus he will work with those techniques and methods that sustain and help the client's need satisfaction [3].

The most useful landmarks of the educational counsellor's activity in parents counselling for the formation, cultivation and exercise of the learning competency, are the following:

- parents are the first "assistants", "facilitators" in the child's development, this assertion being sustained by numerous attachment and cognitive theories;
- the realization of a task by a child may be determined by an adult, by more than one method. The simulation method is the most efficient and the one that corresponds at that moment to the child's reality, leading to the demand that the adult, especially the educator, to apply interactive methods in the child's development and education;
- in order to be sensed and understood by children, parents-adults must be flexible in selecting communication frame; they will be adults, parents and even children while talking. The child becomes a responsible adult only because the parent desires it to, with the recommendation that parents shouldn't avoid parents classes and "parents schools";
- the child's "wisdom" is represented by games, through games the child develops his personality and discovers new channels of communication with adults, through games, the counsellor may enter the child's interior world;
- tails, stories, heroes, legends and metaphors represents access paths and come back paths from the child's world and the actual reality;
- parents play according to the children's rules and, when necessary, they will commute from

the main director role to the assistant director role and vice versa;

- the child doesn't communicate only through words, by also through his body, through drawings, actions, crying, looks and senses, the main communication channel being the affection one;
- you can reach a child by passing through the his imaginary world door; the educational counsellor offers parents only the key chain needed for that door;
- most often, the parents' interpretations don't correspond to the child's interpretations, the child's world doesn't correspond to the adult's world, the events meanings offered by the child are frequently different from the adults' meanings.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS

Child, teenager or young psychopedagogical counselling is realized by the school counsellor in offices of psychopedagogical assistance from schools and in private practice offices. Psychopedagogical counselling realized by educational psychologists in private practice offices of psychology is recognized by the Romanian Psychologists College, only if these psychologists have an authorization from the Commission of Educational Psychology, School Counselling and Vocational Orientation.

One of the greatest problems of the school counsellor is represented by the great number of pupils that need to be treated by only one specialist, a number that can reach even 800 pupils. Still it is important that every school has its school counsellor.

Programs of professional development needed by school counsellors are the one authorized by the ministry, in order to gain the necessary credits for a determined period of time, and less the programs of professional development offered by C.O.P.S.I. (these being necessary for counsellors who went on their one to college). In other words, the majority of professional development programs authorized by the ministry of education are free of

charge (realized with European funding) and the authorized programs of C.O.P.S.I. aren't free of cost, thus resulting a reduced motivation of school counsellors to get this college authorization. Thus a reconsideration of the normative frame is needed in this matter.

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