MENTORING AN ALTERNATIVE PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE

Carmen Maria CHIŞIU

Department of Teaching Training, "Lucian Blaga" University, Sibiu, Romania

Abstract: *The mentoring is seen as a process, whose essence consists in transmitting abilities and information from persons with superiority training and experience to debutantes and novices in the respective circumstance. Mentoring, as subsystem of the Project for Rural Education , has comprised within the formative process in Sibiu county 1315 persons as teaching staff from the rural medium, schoolteachers and teachers, according to purposes and contents of general didactic. The change of behavior has as purpose the exemplary achievement of the response to the needs in a certain moment, to requests, problems and new tasks.*

Keywords: *behavior, experience, mentoring, to change one's mind.*

1. INTRODUCTION

This study has in its view the impact that the mentoring programme had on didactic careers. The impact was measured taking into consideration the statements of the teachers involved in the programme.

2. WHAT IS MENTORING?

2.1. The essence of the mentoring seen as a process regards the conveyance of abilities and information from high-prepared and experienced people to debutants or novices in the respective circumstance. Mentoring as a sub-component of the Project for Rural Education had as target 1315 teachers from rural medium of Sibiu county. The theme of the moulding programme regards the goals and the contents of general didactics. Changing the behaviour's goal is to achieve in an exemplary way the answer to the needs from a certain moment, to the problems, to the requirements, or the new appeared tasks. In its essential meaning, mentoring is seen as a process. Its essence is to convey abolities and information from high-prepared and experienced people to debutants or novices in the respective circumstance.

As far as our interest domain is concerned, the successful mentors cannot be others than the teachers, trainers, formatives, protector models, who can offer opportunities and advice for the development of others, having as background their training and experience, and they are compatible to identify the situations and current events, which are to be made or are possible. These can interfere in the life of the novices, offering them knowledge and experience, in order to deal successfully with the complexity, with the current events and with the future virtuality, in the professional and social life, in the community from which they belong to, and in the outside medium, where they are developing their activity. Mentors are advisors, professional experienced people, owners of some psycho-social, communicative and moral qualities, and therefore they are first of all identity models, support and information resource, professional human type capable to entertain a dynamic relationship between himself, as a person eager for leading, and another person, desirous to learn, before he stumbles on the difficulties. A friendship relation between the mentor and the person who is taught, is not excluded, on the contrary, it is healthy. (Nicola, 2004)

We can extract some constants, some fundamental characteristics from the thoughtful and syntagmathic components of the various definition:

• Mentoring is a communicative, interpersonal relation, one to one, or one to two or more persons, from which one is more professional mature (mentor), but not necessarily older than the others;

• At a circumstantial level, it can be indicated a crisis situation or a transition period , in work or in thinking or action mode of the person who has needs, who is searching or is asking for help;

• A mentoring relation develops during a period of time, when the needs of the person who is taught and the relation of the nature are to be changed. Mentor has to be conscious of these changes, and to diversify the grade and type of the attention, support, advice, information and encouragement he offers.

• The mentoring process can be developed also on a determined period of time, when he has as purpose the achieving of concrete pre-established goals, which belong to the both categories of members of didactical relation, also of the mentor, but especially of the person who is taught, in order to develop, to change. (Kay & Hinds, 2007)

Without any doubt, the mentoring does not have to be perceived as a knowledge transmission, even though this thing happens somehow. Mentoring must have as axial principle the application of some knowledge, the achievement of a set of correlation between knowledge and their applicability, offering support, the encouragement of change and looking for new experiences, Hic et Hunc, here and now.

The change of behaviour has as purpose the exemplary achievement of the response to the needs in a certain moment, to requests, problems and new tasks. With this imperative, the mentor must conceive and exert his vocation; even though this seems too imbibed into a romantic realism and little metaphoric grandiloquence, to us it is very interesting the statement: „*Mentors are guides, who are leading us during the journey of our life...They are our hopes, the are brightening our way and they are helping us to de-codify and interprete the marks met on the road, they are advertising us about the dangers that might appear, and they are pointing out the unexpected pleasure during our journey.*" (Gehrke, 1988:27)

The researchers, from the inter-disciplinary field of educational sciences, consider mentoring, alongside of what the American English „coaching" means, the first components of the children's education, of evergrowing and permanent education. These concepts, mainly specialized in the last three-four decades of the 20th century, are brought in the public attention, although the problems of these syntagms have been known since the beginning of what specialists call modern education, in the second half of the 19th century. (Les, Leibowitz, 1983:28/4).

We are always talking about the manner we think and why do we change our minds. The meaning of this simple assertion is clear enough: our mind seems to be concerned to act into a certain direction, and after a certain procedure, the mind is oriented to a different direction. How simple the change of mind formula would appear to a superficial analysis, the change of mind phenomenon, as a rethinking and reorienting of the thinking vector, is one of the less examined and non-understandable experiences.

What does „to change our mind" mean?

What happens when we „change our mind"?

Isn't that true that when we accept „changing our mind", we actually accept changing?

Is „the change of mind" produced by their own cognitives, is it produced by the ideas suggested by those from surroundings?

What determines a person to „change his mind" and to act according to this reorientation?

What does the „change of mind" production favourise? Questions....Questions! Of course, the minds are changing with difficulty.

But many aspects of our lives are oriented through this procedure- to convince a colleague to report himself to a subject and a new attitude, or to try ourselves to let behind

our own preconceptions. Some of us are really involved in the effort of convincing the people to change their minds: the teacher who unveils to the pupils new methods of analysing some familiar subjects, the therapeutic, who influences the manner in how a patient is redefining himself, the seller or the advertising producer, who persuades the customers to try the product of new brand, the mentor, who tries to convince the teacher to organize the study in class, rather based on pupils than on himself, the project manager, who succeeds in convincing the new team of the collaboration value within the work group.

It is said that "if something is not rotten, it doesn't need to be fixed". Not necessarily we can say that something is rotten, but the state of the rural education cannot be considered a satisfactory one. Mentoring, as subsystem of the Project for Rural Education, has comprised within the formative process in Sibiu county 1315 persons as teaching staff from the rural medium, schoolteachers and teachers, according to purposes and contents of general didactic.

The general setting within this project develops, is determined by: the change from the conceptual and practical point of view of the teaching and learning modalities, a higher access to methods, school supplies, and opportunities of teachers' professional development from the rural medium, promotion of the educational experiences, which motivate the student and answer to his educational needs (any student can learn if he is taught and he learns adequately), the assurance understanding and getting the local community support for the achievement of the proposed educational goals.

The program's general goal is to improve the access to a higher education for the students from the rural medium through: better scholar results, higher graduation percentage towards other education institutes.

The specific goals of the project are: professional development and the opportunities assurance of development in career for the teachers from the rural medium, the assimilation of new concepts and ideas regarding the improvement of teaching-

learning activity, the assurance of some diversified educational resources and their employment, in order to broaden the management knowledge of the class, to improve the training strategies and teaching-evaluation methods, to assure the requisite support for projecting and implementation of new didactic improvement experiences of the process teaching- learning- evaluation.

Direct beneficiaries are the students and the teachers from the rural medium, local administration and communities, the training programs suppliers, the decision factors. (Kay & Hinds, 2007)

1.2. The „change of mind" factors.

In the "Change of mind" treaty book, Haward Gardner identifies some factors, which functions as in the case of positive change of mind: reason, enlistment, resonance, redescriptions, resources, rewards, the event reality, resistance.

We are trying to respond how the six factors are in the mentoring program-conception, appliances and implementation-through reflection over the program itself and through centralization and interpretation of the responses offered by those who are mentored, in the evaluation questionnaire.

Reason. The concept, the appliances and the implementation mode of the mentoring program represents a rational approach, they involve: the identification of significant factors, to reflect upon each of them, the analysis of needs, realized by each teacher mentored, the shaping of an ensemble image regarding the teachers' needs of professional development, to a better adjustment to the needs of the students from the rural medium.

Enlistment. To complete the rational argument, we have the relevant data collecting for the different onset of each group of formatives, even of each formative, depending on situations particularities, possible achievement aspect, as an effect of schedule flexibility itself, as well as an effect of the capacity to put a diagnostic and of the mentors' adaptation.

117

Resonance. It appears often when a person feels that it exists "a bond" with someone who determines him to change his mind, when he finds that he can "trust" that person, or when he feels he "respects" that person. The tryout, to which the mentors were subject, has required experience regarding the formative field with adults, passion for didactic, proven formative competences, professional reputation, as well as the teachers' appreciation. All of these demonstrate the sustained level of the resonance.

Redescriptions. An act of changing your mind, your opinion, becomes a persuasive act, as far as this is substituted as representation among different shapes series, shapes that are intensifying reciprocal. Mentoring, as conception, instruments and deployment: direct formative, professional dialogue, individual research on the proposed contents, seeing demonstrative video recorded activities, inter-assistances, return to the meetings with the mentor, offers different onset modalities, sources of reciprocal intensification, inspiration in capitalization and valorisation the didactic creativity.

Resources and rewards. The possibility to think again and to change your mind exists in every open-minded person. This phenomenon can be started much faster when widely advantages loom. The first advantage-response was the personal experience of the formatives within the working group: satisfaction of something new, involvement, professional and personal progress, shared respect, doubled by the students' response, when they have to apply in classroom what they have studied before.

The event reality. Certain events take place in society, in the extended meaning of the word, affecting more persons, not only those who contemplate their thinking revolution. The Romanian educational reality, in general, and especially the rural medium one, requires, asks for a change in what the onset of the educational act does mean, with the hope that the situation will be set again.

Resistances. The six factors identified so far can all contribute in the effort to start the "change of mind" phenomenon. But it would not be realistic to think that the simple existence of the advantaged factors is enough. Any kind of understanding effort of the "change of mind" phenomenon must take into account different forms of resistance, which has been felt as a formatives' behaviour manifestation, as well as a result in interpreting the questionnaire. (Gardner, 2006: 82-87)

And all these because how Meynard Keynes says: "the real difficulty in producing a change is not to develop new ideas, but to get rid of the old ones" (Gardner, 2006).

We present the 1315 questions teachers in areas of Sibiu and the quantitative expression in Table 1, the percentage of responses.

Table 1. The responses of teachers in assessment questionnaire items, expressed in percentage

Item	Heavily [%]	Largely [%]	Insufficient [%]	At all [%]
1	37	60	3	0
2	12	84	4	0
3	24	64	12	0
4	29	69	2	0
5	60	34	6	0
6	42	47	11	0
7	27	51	22	0
8	81	19	0	0
9	52	40	8	0
10	81	19	0	0

The questionnaire items are:

1. Have the activities in which you participated increased attention to students and to their specific needs?

2. By participating in activities are you convinced of the need for colleagues to share knowledge and experiences?

3. Do you feel ready to apply classroom ideas, teaching methods and materials acquired?

4. To what extent this work has contributed to skills and attitudes needed for teamwork?

5. Have you participated in activities that will help you to put into practice in collaboration with colleagues from the perspective of modern teaching and learning?

6. Do you believe that these activities promote a new vision which considers part of the community school and community to encourage full use of local resources to achieve maximum learning potential of students?

7. Have you participated in activities that will help you develop collaboration of all stakeholders involved in supporting local education?

8. Do you appreciate the quality of the professional mentors?

9. Do the training modules studied adequate professional development opportunities (training needs are adequate, accessible, they are translated into practical activities)?

10. Do the training modules completed promote new ideas on teaching methods, do they have appropriate instructional strategies, curriculum design containing news of the course taught?

Table 2. Correlations between items and factors assessment questionnaire rethinking Howard Gardner's theory.

Reason	Recruitment	Resonance	Redescriptions	Resources and rewards	Reality Occurrence
X	X		X		X
X			X		X
	X	X	X	X	
X	X	X		X	X
X				X	X
X					X
X				X	X
X		X		X	
X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X

3. CONCLUSIONS

As shown in Table 2, most teachers interviewed highly appreciated and largely characteristic aspects of the mentoring program. To some extent, all factors of rethinking Gardner's theory has been found in design, tools and the implementation of the mentoring program.

The final questionnaire for teachers, referring to changes made after the mentoring program, the most common specifications were:

- the organization of learning;
- methods that motivate students and increases their interest in the lesson;
- learning the strategies to facilitate communication and networking with students;
- the weight given the time spent and specific methods students knowledge;
- attitude towards interactive learning, how to approach the activities carried out and parents;
- teaching strategies that enhance learning efficiency;
- using new technologies in teaching-learning-assessment;
- using alternative methods of assessment
- learning differentiation;
- depending on the particular interests and availability pupil extra skill and safety to develop tools assessment;
- another vision of the role and how to achieve continuous assessment;
- a new way of communication and cooperation with others: students, parents, colleagues;
- extra security in developing design tools;
- work to classes concurrent efficiency;
- improve teacher – student;
- fostering positive orientation against critics;
- intervention mode, where students with behavior problems;
- self-knowledge and self-assessment capacity;

- extra enthusiasm and confidence in the work of education;
- opinion and attitude towards training;
- views and attitudes towards sharing experiences within the group of colleagues.

The changes are very diverse cast, covering both the design and deployment and evaluation of teaching, knowledge, networking, communication, motivating students, communication, networking and group level team of teachers, share experiences, issues found in the largely to expectations expressed by teachers in suitcase expectations.

We appreciate, arguing that these responses from the mentoring program of the Rural Education Project, teachers have developed a conceptual and practical change in the Application, in the work. This enables us to believe that an action falling changer of Gardener's theory will produce a change.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Chişiu, C.M. (2011). *Mentorat şi dezvoltare vocaţională*. Sibiu: „Lucian Blaga" University Publishing House.

2. Frey, B.C., Noller, R.B. (1992). *Mentoring for creative productivity.* The International Creativity Network.

3. Gardner, H. (2006). *Tratat de răzgândire. Arta şi ştiinţa răzgândirii noastre şi a altora*, Ed. Allfa, Bucureşti.

4. Gehrke, N. (1988). *Toward a definition on mentoring, Theory into practice.*

5. Kay, D., Hinds, R. (2007). A practical guide to mentoring. How to help others achieve their goals. *How To Books,* No. 27(3).

6. Huberman, A.M. (1978). *Cum se produc schimbările în educaţie - contribuţie la studiul inovaţiei*, Bucharest: Didactical & Pedagogical Publishing House.

7. Les, D., Leibowitz, F.B. (1983). A mentor: would you know one if you saw one? *Supervising management,* No. 28(4).

8. Nicola, Gr. (2004). *Un ambient pentru excelenţă-Mentoratul*. Sibiu: Psihomedia.

9. ***. (2003). *Proiectul pentru Învăţământul Rural. Ghid de aplicare. Kitul mentorului*, Bucharest: Ministry of Education and Research.