

COLLOQUIA

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TUTORING – AN INNOVATIVE METHOD IN REHABILITATION WORK

Abstract: The methodology of working with socially maladjusted people is a constantly evolving branch of rehabilitation pedagogy. In the area, new proposals of interactions are either suggested or widely tested and established methods of work are being improved. It should be noted that the practical arrangements for social rehabilitation and correction mainly depend on the then-dominant theories attempting to interpret human behaviour. The practice of rehabilitation institutions has been considerably influenced by psychological concepts ranging from behaviourism through psychoanalysis and existentialism to humanistic, cognitive and positive psychology. This article presents the proposal to use the tutoring method in working with the socially maladjusted. This method is the result of many theoretical approaches. Depending on the needs and individual situation of the mentee, different solutions are used. Its most important element is unrepeatable, unique work of the educator, based on trust and acceptance.

Key words: working method of social rehabilitation, trust, acceptance, responsibility, dialogue.

Introduction

A young individual, particularly in the period of adolescence, has large problems with the definition of his/her identity and a further way of life. The processes of strengthening his/her development are the processes of socialization and upbringing. Upbringing is defined by a process of purposeful and conscious shaping of human behaviours, attitudes, social roles, personality or its important features in accordance with previously assumed pedagogical patterns (Pytka 2000). However, socialization is defined as the entirety of influences exerted on the individual by the social and cultural environment in which he/she lives and develops himself/herself, as if independently from the efforts of tutors and teachers. The process of socialization is spontaneous and goes beyond control of tutors and teachers.

Socialization aims at the proper adaptation of the individual to correct social role functioning in connection with it (Fidelus 2008).

Unfortunately, the primal processes of upbringing and socialization do not always turn out to be effective, and then one seeks different solutions in the range of rehabilitation processes (Fidelus 2008, p. 31-77). A person who is brought up and socialized incorrectly demonstrates many behaviours recognized as inappropriate, undesirable or harmful in the social or individual sense. For example, he/she is excessively aggressive and manifests suicidal proclivities and proclivities for social isolation and addictions (Fidelus 2008, p. 10). Therefore, one can treat social maladaptation as an incorrectly formed *human-environment relationship* having a tendency to self-strengthening and escalation as a result of the so-called 'self-fulfilling prophecy' (Wysocka 2009, p. 38).

However, the present methods of rehabilitation pedagogy are not sufficient in every case to modify behaviours, attitudes, roles and human personality. Therefore, the pedagogue's activity should be characterized by a progressive approach that means reaching for newer and newer methods of dealing with the young individual.

The methods of personal development *tutoring* and *coaching*, which initially were used mainly in the training of managerial personnel and high-level personnel, have been popular in Poland for several years. People not in higher positions, either who want to find their new way of life or who go through a crisis, have also started to benefit from these methods. *Tutoring* and *coaching* are methods that have not been used in pedagogy for a long period of time. *Tutoring* is a method of education consisting of individual work with a student (tutee). This is a long-standing method and should last at least one semester. Meetings are held once a week. The work consists of a conversation to which the student prepares himself/herself. The conversation is the main tool for work in the *tutoring method*. The main aim of this method is as follows: the integral development (both knowledge and personality) and bringing the tutee to the moment in which he/she will be able to bring himself/herself up. The model of the 'master-student' relationship is a characteristic feature of this method combining freedom of contact and a high level of substantive classes. A tutor is a mentor and a trustworthy person for a tutee. One of the most important skills of the tutor is identification of the tutee's individual needs and satisfying them. The tutor helps the tutee not only in organizing work for himself/herself and learning a subject, but also in forming his/her own identity. He/she helps the tutee to formulate aims and make a choice concerning the field of study for a given education level.

Coaching, as a method of pedagogical work, unlike *tutoring*, concentrates on the workshops of the rehabilitation process. A *coach* helps to shape skills of a tutee, and choose aims for the close future and work methods. The coach can work with tutees in various situations both with individuals having learning problems and also with those uniquely talented ones who desire to improve their results. Using this method for work requires that coach-tutee meetings should take place no more

seldom than once a month. A partnership relationship and mutual confidence play a significant role here.

Rehabilitation work, in order to be considered effective, has to include a detailed analysis of the specific tutee's problem. Otherwise, one can commit mistakes that will waste already reached effects. Applying methods based on the individual work with the tutee is essential. I believe that such a method is the tutoring method.

Historic and cultural basis of the tutoring method

I will try hereunder to place the *tutoring method* in wider historical and cultural context. Note that similar solutions to the present tutoring have been applied and practiced successfully for many centuries. At present, in such delicate fields as spirituality or psychology, the similar methods are also applied successfully.

It is also necessary to emphasize that *tutoring* is a new notion in the Polish scientific world. That is why there are not so many publications on this subject—particularly in the rehabilitation context—hence using publications from the Internet.

Note that in the whole history of mankind, learning occurred through the interpersonal exchange of thoughts and experiences. People who could be called 'wise' or 'sages' were people in demand. They advised in important worldly issues. Their insight did not often result from larger knowledge, but from the skill of taking a wider look at the chosen fragment of reality.

In the history of philosophy and the history of teaching (especially during the peak development of Greek thought, but also later more or less to mediaeval times), a model of the itinerant teacher is known. They had the authority in virtually all scientific fields that were known then. Their pupils were individuals chosen by them, who, owing to the fact they lived together and thanks to trips and discussions, got to know all that the teacher could pass on to them. The number of pupils did not usually exceed twelve. However, it was not indoctrination; although the majority of the pupils were followers of their master's views afterwards, a large part of them later founded their own schools promoting their own way of thinking (as an example, one can give the pupils of Socrates, five of whom chose a radically different way of life and philosophizing). Also in the Church tradition, in both the Western and the Eastern Church, the institutions of father confessors existed. They were spiritually and practically experienced individuals who in definite circumstances shared their experience in overcoming spiritual difficulties. They often required obedience from their penitents, but very often explained the situation in which the given individual found himself and they together looked for the possibilities of overcoming ensuing obstacles. Even though I am writing about these solutions using the past tense, these institutions exist in the present day.

At present, so-called supervision has also existed for several decades, particularly among people professionally dealing with psychology. A supervisor, as it was defined in one medical article, is 'someone with larger knowledge and experience

who supports, helps, suggests various possibilities of solutions and is a special lightning-conductor' (Wysocka 2004). Now one can see that such a person is very highly regarded. Many doctors, psychologists and social workers need to contact a supervisor.

Notions of a tutor and *tutoring*. The application of the method

Etymology and some certain connotations of the word 'tutor' one can find in the dictionary of W. Kopaliński. As the author informs, 'a tutor in former times a guardian, an educator; at British universities – an adjunct supervising individually students' work. Etym. – Eng. from Lat. 'a defender, a guardian of juveniles' from *tutus* p.p. from *tueri* 'to look; to protect, to keep; to guard' (Kopaliński 2007).

One can define the *tutoring method itself* as the process of development of a person that occurs as a result of the individual and a supporting relationship with another person – a tutor (Nowosielska 2011). There are three important elements that should be distinguished in this notion. A person's development is the aim of this method's application. It happens through the individual relationship with a tutor that aims at supporting this person in his/her endeavours. It is also necessary to notice the 'between the lines' assumption of this definition – the work on the personal development is an effort of the given person. The tutor is neither a parent nor a guardian who 'leads the person by the hand', improves every lack and foresees every threat. The individual does the whole work himself/herself.

At present, this method is more and more popular. I believe that it could be applied successfully in the fields connected with upbringing and rehabilitation. It is already applied in work with students, particularly in realizing some research projects under a professor's guidance and supervision. It also has found its place in work with the school youth (lower secondary schools and secondary schools). The work in the *tutoring system* with youth and children burdened with specific difficulties in learning is also a certain novelty. There are also the first attempts to use this method in rehabilitation work.

The possibilities of application of the tutoring method in rehabilitation work

Rehabilitation work is a unique pedagogical discipline. It does not consist in upbringing in the sense of acquiring and developing certain social competences, but in the transformation of an incorrectly shaped vision of the individual's social relationships with whom the work is carried out. We also do not have usually to deal with children, but with youth or with adults who already have the most important phases of socialization behind them. So this is complex pedagogy, and its activities are subject to failures several times.

What now can bring the *tutoring method to the rehabilitation work*? I would like to appeal in this context to observations of L. Pytka, included in an article

entitled ‘Various formulations of the definition of rehabilitation’ (Pytko 2008, p. 73-77). The author affirms that among the various conceptions of rehabilitation also exist the ‘rehabilitating self-upbringing’, which, for Cz. Czapów, is also defined as self-control (Pytko 2008, p. 76). One can qualify these actions in the following way: ‘this is the kind of the control of one’s own development allowing to, despite breakdowns and crises, [...] higher and higher stages of social functioning, and achieve more and more mature form of himself/herself’ (Pytko 2008, p. 76). Before I get down to the presentation of my own reflections, I would like to present in this context one more thought of L. Pytko that brings in a lot to this subject. Namely, he notices that ‘This variant of rehabilitation (i.e. aiming at self-controlling (author’s note of A.F.) turns attention to hardships of the internal transformation and the accompanying suffering’ (Pytko 2008, p. 76).

I will once again quote the question from the beginning of the previous paragraph. What can the *tutoring method* bring in the context of the introduced determinants of the process of rehabilitation? I just see its largest value in overcoming suffering and uncertainty that the rehabilitated individual is going through. Every human effort combines with some suffering. There is no human being who wants to reach success and does not fight appearing fatigued from time to time. You should sometimes ‘go through’ poor living conditions, lack of money, uncertainty about tomorrow. Many people who have reached something in their lives have experienced it. A person who tries to change himself/herself and rehabilitate will also certainly experience it. We already find here the first task for a tutor to explain that ‘it happens’ and that sometimes it is necessary to go through such situations not seeking ‘shortcuts’. It is necessary also now to turn attention to emotional reactions such as bitterness, anger towards the people around him/her, or apathy, and not to allow them to obscure a logical analysis of the situation and hamper attempts to solve it.

The next issue is learning to wait for the results of one’s own work. A socially maladjusted individual has learnt to satisfy immediately his/her various needs through his/her way of life. Incidentally, it is necessary to add here that these needs were limited to basic ones, i.e., forming the basis of the ‘pyramid of needs’, as A. Maslow defines it (Maslow 2009, p. 114-119). The impossibility of satisfying higher needs and the accompanying emptiness often causes their places to have been taken by alcohol, sexual promiscuity or drugs. The tutor’s task is to show that higher needs, such as the needs for affiliation, love, respect and self-realization, can be satisfied. However, it requires time; the gratification is not immediate. Hence the needs of learning to wait and restraining impulses of the moment to wait for postponed gratification.

As can be determined, the rehabilitated individual is less resistant to harm. He/she might expect that he/she has paid off his/her debt to society after serving his/her sentence. In connection with it, he/she would like to get back immediately to a normal, average life in which he/she will be respected equally with other citizens. However, even if he/she is able to change his/her habits and manners successfully,

the way people will usually label him/her will be unusually nagging and painful. I perceive here a significant role of a tutor who will be able to point out the dignity of the person and present his/her strengths in order that the rehabilitated individual would not feel worse in these difficult situations. I can imagine various social situations in which one can participate together with him/her, particularly encouraging him/her to the voluntary service or to contact with the handicapped or disabled individuals who are able to express their gratitude in many different ways.

While applying the tutoring method in rehabilitation, we rely on getting to know each other and building up a relationship with a tutee that will allow us to recognize his/her needs. The next stage of the tutor's work is changing attitudes and setting aims to which they will jointly strive. Then through conversations or common trips, for example, we can inspire the tutee. The support that the tutee can receive from his/her tutor is also not without meaning. The tutor is often the only person who can give him/her this support. The conversation is what makes tutoring flexible and can make it effective in the rehabilitation work. This direct tutor's 'testimony of life' affects the tutee educationally.

Key moments while using the tutoring method

I tried above to show several possible situations in which the presence of a tutor might be very helpful. One can try to enumerate the features by which such a person should be characterized. I will turn attention here only to one of them that seems to me most essential. Namely, I think that emotional empathy is this property by which every tutor should be characterized. By emotional empathy, I have in mind an ability of co-feeling with a simultaneous skill of recognizing psychical feelings, cognition of a way of thinking and interpreting definite situations in which our tutee can find himself/herself. Circumstances determining the effectiveness of this method are also important. It seems that two basic elements, closeness and constancy, have the essential meaning.

You should not understand closeness as emotional attachment. In practice, it manifests itself as 'being for' a specific individual. The time that the tutor is going to dedicate to meeting with the person having problems has to be sometimes for this person only. In practice, for sure it is worth finding a separate room for a free conversation that will not be interrupted by telephones or visits by different guests. External conditions are often helpful in understanding another person well, the more so because in the very nature of things entering the world of another person, building up a friendly relationship with him/her, and attempting to understand his/her situation and varied dependences determining his/her behaviour are very difficult tasks.

I know from my own experience that it is necessary to keep secret the issues raised during the meetings for building up the atmosphere of closeness. It breeds a confidence indispensable for carrying on sincere conversations. A separate problem is

the issue of arousing confidence in the individual who, during a considerable part of his/her life, convinced himself/herself that no one can be trusted.

Constancy is the second important element. It seems to me that one can never leave an impression that meetings and conversations are for a tutor only an addition, an entertainment in his/her life, and that when a different opportunity of spending time in more interesting way occurs, he will seize the opportunity with certainty. Constancy manifests that 'I care for your future because I have ways to keep my life organized to have time for You'.

Constancy also teaches that certain invariable determinants and values, which you should obey, exist in life. Already systematic, the invariably friendly meeting itself with the individual can reinforce his/her conviction that 'I am a quality person worth covering a definite distance to meet and with whom one can spend fruitfully some good time'.

Conclusion

The tutoring method can be applied in many fields of pedagogical work. Due to its personal character, it is not an easy method to realize. During meetings varied ties come into being between a tutor and a person for whom he/she cares. However, it seems to be an effective method due to its accompanying character, because the tutee himself/herself does the whole great work of formation of his/her own character, finding in himself/herself willpower (only sometimes supported through motivational interventions of the tutor).

With the help of an experienced tutor, the socially maladjusted individuals can reach effects of their work. *Tutoring* can work in the process of rehabilitation in which recognizing the person's individual needs is so important. Tutees often need complex help that assumes work on changing the value system, lifestyle and habits, acquiring professional skills, and breaking away from old acquaintances. It is not possible to solve these problems while working on each problem separately. It is necessary to apply a holistic and individual approach, and the tutoring method ensures such an approach.

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METODA TUTORINGU JAKO INNOWACJA W PRACY REHABILITACYJNEJ

Streszczenie: Metodyka pracy z osobami nieprzystosowanymi społecznie to dział pedagogiki resocjalizacyjnej nieustannie ewoluujący. W jego obszarze pojawiają się nowe propozycje oddziaływań, bądź udoskonalane są sprawdzone i utrwalone metody pracy. Należy zauważyć, że praktyczne rozwiązania w pracy resocjalizacyjnej głównie uzależnione są od dominujących w danym czasie teorii podejmujących próbę interpretacji zachowań człowieka. Swoje znaczące wpływy na praktykę resocjalizacyjną wywarły głównie koncepcje psychologiczne począwszy od behawioryzmu, poprzez psychoanalizę, egzystencjalizm, psychologię humanistyczną, kognitywną i pozytywną. W niniejszym artykule zaprezentowano propozycję wykorzystania w pracy z osobami nieprzystosowanymi społecznie metody tutoring. Metoda ta jest wypadkową wielu podejść teoretycznych. W zależności od potrzeb i sytuacji podopiecznego wykorzystywane są różne rozwiązania. Jej najistotniejszym elementem jest osobiwa, niepowtarzalna praca wychowawcy, której podstawą jest zaufanie i akceptacja.

Słowa kluczowe: Metoda pracy resocjalizacyjnej, zaufanie, akceptacja, odpowiedzialność, dialog.

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