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Tutoring method – an innovative way in rehabilitation work

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Introduction

A young individual, particularly in the period of adolescence, has large problems with a 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 which help in the shaping in the course of upbringing [Pytko, 2000: 9]. 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 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 [Pytko, 2000: 9-10].

Unfortunately, not always primal processes of upbringing and socialization turn out to be effective, and then one seeks different solutions in the range of rehabilitation process [Fidelus, 2008: 31-77]. A person who is

brought up and socialized incorrectly demonstrates many behaviours recognized for inappropriate, undesirable or harmful in the social or individual sense. For example, it happens that he/she is excessively aggressive, manifests suicidal proclivities, and proclivities for social isolation and addictions [Fidelus, 2008: 10]. Therefore one can treat social misadaptation as an incorrectly formed *human-environment relationship* having a tendency of self-strengthening and escalation as a result of the so-called “self-fulfilling prophecy” [Wysocka, 2009: 38].

But not in every case the present methods of rehabilitation pedagogy are sufficient to modify behaviours, attitudes, roles and human personality. Therefore, the pedagogue’s activity should be characterized by a progressive approach which 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 in no higher positions, who either want to find their new way of life or go through a crisis, have also started to benefit from these methods. *Tutoring* and *coaching* are the methods which have not been used in pedagogy for a long period of time. *Tutoring* is the method of education consisting in the 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 in 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 also 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 in organizing work for him-

self/herself, learning a subject, but also in forming his/her own identity. He helps to formulate aims and make the choice concerning 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 the various situations both with the individuals having learning problem and also with these uniquely talented ones who desire to improve their results. Using this method for work requires the coach-tutee meetings which should take place not more seldom than once a month. A partnership relationship and mutual confidence plays a significant role here.

It is considered that rehabilitation work, in order to be effective, has to include a detailed analysis of the specific tutee's problem. Otherwise one can commit mistakes which 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 the wider historical and cultural context. One can notice that similar solutions to *the present tutoring have been applied and practiced successfully* for many centuries. At present also in such delicate fields as spirituality or psychology the similar methods are 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.

One can notice in the whole history of mankind that learning occurred through the interpersonal exchange of thoughts and experiences. People who can be called "wise" or "sages" were people in demand. They advised in worldly important 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 history of philosophy and history of teaching (especially during the peak development of Greek thought, but also later more or less to mediaeval times), a model of an itinerant teacher is known. He had the authority in virtually all scientific fields which were known then. His pupils were individuals chosen by him who owing to the fact they lived together, and thanks to trips and discussions they got to know all what the teacher could pass them on. Their number did not usually exceed twelve. However, it was not indoctrination because though majority of the pupils were followers of their master's views afterwards, a large part of them, however, founded later 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 Church tradition, in both the Western and the Eastern Church, existed the institutions of father confessors (west) and old men (east). 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, however, much 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 until the present day.

At present, also so-called supervision has existed for several decades particularly among people professionally dealing with psychology. A supervisor, as it was defined in one of the medical articles, is "someone with larger knowledge and experience who supports, helps, suggests various possibilities of solutions and is a special lightning-conductor" [Superwizor wycisza..., 2004].

Now you 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 also some certain meaning intuitions 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: 352].

One can define the *tutoring method itself* as: the process of development of a person which occurs as a result of the individual and supporting relationship with another person - a tutor. (Tutoring – o metodzie, 2011) There are three important elements which you should distinguish in this notion. A personal 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 "hidden 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. One cannot allow to occur the situation that the tutor cares more for a personal development of the supported individual than this person cares himself/herself for his/her own development.

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 realizing some research projects under the 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 the rehabilitation work.

The possibilities of application of the *tutoring method* in the rehabilitation work

The rehabilitation work is a unique pedagogical discipline. It does not consist in upbringing in meaning of acquiring and developing certain social competences, but in transformation of the 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 also 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" [Pytka, 2008: 73-78]. The author affirms that among the various conceptions of rehabilitation also exist the "rehabilitating self-upbringing", which for Cz. Czapów, also defines as self-controlling [Pytka, 2008: 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 allowing to achieve more and more mature form of himself/herself" [Pytka, 2008: 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. Pytka which brings in a lot to here-with deliberations. Namely, he notices that: "This variant of rehabilitation (i.e. aiming at self-controlling [author's note of A.F.]) turns an attention to hardships of the internal transformation and the accompanying suffering" [Pytka, 2008: 76].

I will once again quote the question from the beginning of the previous paragraph. What the *tutoring method* can bring in the context of the introduced determinants of the process of rehabilitation? I just see its largest value in overcoming suffering and uncertainty which the rehabilitated individual is going through. Every human effort combines with some suf-

fering. There is no human being who wants to reach success and does not fight appearing fatigue from time to time. You should sometimes "go through" poor living conditions, lack of money, uncertainty about tomorrow. Many people who reached something in their lives have experienced it. A person who tries to change himself 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 an attention to emotional reactions such as bitterness, anger towards the people around him/her or apathy, and do not 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 unreasonable individual has learnt to satisfy immediately his various needs through his way of life. Incidentally, it is necessary to add here that these needs were limited to basic ones i.e. forming the basis of "pyramid of needs" - as A. Maslow defines it (2009: 114-119). Impossibility of satisfying higher needs and its accompanying emptiness often causes that their places have been taken by alcohol, sexual promiscuity or drugs. The tutor's task is to show that higher needs as e.g. needs for affiliation, love, respect, 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 until postponed gratification.

As one can figure out 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 dignity of this person and present his/her strengths in order that the rehabilitated individual would not feel as someone 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, 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 what will allow us to recognize his/her needs. The next stage of the tutor's work becomes work on the change of attitudes and setting aims to which they will jointly strive. Then through conversations or e.g. common trips, we can inspire the tutee. The support which the tutee can receive from his tutor is also not without meaning. The tutor is often the only person who can give him/her this support. The conversation is this what makes *tutoring flexible* and can make effective in the rehabilitation work. This just 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 presence of a tutor might be very helpful. One can try to enumerate the features which such a person should be characterized by. I will turn an attention here only to one of them which seems to me most essential. Namely, I think that emotional empathy is this propriety which every tutor should be characterized by. By emotional empathy I understand 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 deciding about 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 by "being for" a specific individual. Time which 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 which will not be interrupted

by telephones or visits of different guests. External conditions are often helpful in good understanding of another person, the more so because in the very nature of things entering the world of another person, building up with him/her friendly relationships, 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 the secret of issues raised during the meetings for building up the atmosphere of closeness. It breeds 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 life convinced himself 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, entertainment in his life, and when occurs a different opportunity of spending time in more interesting way he certainly will seize it. 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, invariably friendly meeting itself with the individual can reinforce his conviction that I am a quality person worth covering a definite distance to meet and with whom one can spend fruitfully some good time.

Ending

The tutoring method can be applied in many fields of the pedagogical work. Due to its personal character, it is not an easy method for realization. During meetings varied ties come into being between a tutor and a person whom he/she takes care of. However, it seems to be an effective method due to its accompanying character because the tutee himself/herself does the whole great work on formation of his/her own character, finding in

himself will power (only sometimes supported through motivational interventions of the tutor).

With the help of an experienced tutor the unreasonable socially individuals can reach effects of their work. *Tutoring* can work in the process of rehabilitation in which so important is recognizing the person's individual needs. Tutees often need complex help which assumes work on changing the value system, lifestyle, habits, acquiring professional skills, 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 such an approach ensures the *tutoring method*.

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