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PREVENTION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL THROUGH THE DISCURSIVE PARADIGM

Abstract

Prevention in primary school is always atypical subject. This paper examines the different theoretical discourses at the primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention levels that reflect prevention approaches. Particular attention has been focused on the social pedagogical conceptualization of prevention in primary school, where indifference presents a special category that needs to be given more attention. The paper introduces different models of prevention in the school system, with a particular focus on early detection, selection criteria in schools that are often monitored only superficially, the importance of the pedagogical relationship and working with parents as well as what is needed for a school climate improvement. Further, the main premises of confrontational pedagogy are presented, as well as concrete prevention models, and a way of thinking that enables the finding of educational models for children who have difficulties without causing any harm to them or others.

Keywords: *confrontational pedagogy, emotional and behavioural difficulties, prevention, social pedagogy*

Introduction

The principle of prevention is in theoretical, strategic, and practical terms one of the fundamental concepts of education. Prevention is a frequently misused term, a part of flowery rhetoric, as well as an activity without a clear distinction between what is still perceived as prevention and what is curative work. In this paper we will present primary, secondary, and tertiary forms of prevention, together with some other possible classifications. There are many different approaches and methods, and as is the case with educational methods, here it is also difficult to single out the effective or ineffective ones. The aim of this article is to compare some current concepts of prevention and review these current approaches in terms of applicability.

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Defining the Prevention Perspective

The term prevention presents the integrated formula of rational and transparent approach for all types of behaviour related to hazards, damage, insecurity, difficulties, and conflicts, or, in short, undesired behaviours (Schilling, 1995). In this regard, the prevention discourse is meant as a self-description of interventions composed by each institution that faces the shadows of social normality. Prevention is not intended to provide help when something goes wrong but presents a structural principle of the lifeworld-oriented support for young people (Thiersch, 1992).

The term prevention was “discovered” only in the 20th century. The preventive nature of social pedagogy was explicitly denoted in 1929. Gertrud Bäumer (1929) defined it as a collective work of healing and prevention that should be focused on practical actions. The call for prevention profiling is not a new phenomenon, but rather an integral element of all precursors to social pedagogy and social work (Gilling & Pierpoint, 1999; Schaar-schuch, 1998; Walklate, 2003).

Strategically speaking, prevention refers to actions that prevent difficulties before they arise. Difficulties need to be resolved, relationships need to be improved, and the development of children and young people needs to be encouraged. We should offer them support instead of taking the role of firefighters who react only when a child has already been harmed. We may say that prevention is timely intervention, or the right reaction at the right time. Anyway, many people, be it in politics, theory or practice, adopt this etiquette of prevention.

Prevention is a task of society as a whole with many individual sub-tasks. It is directly linked to the timeliness principle. Prevention is an investment. Prevention renders possible a logical and totally non-contradictory and real sovereignty in taking part in voluntary action, and enables the fulfilment of the legal rights of the addressees to be treated in a proper way (Bauer, 2005).

The discourse of crime prevention is also present in the field of criminology. Prevention is also mentioned in the case of social control which Cohen (1985) formulates as the ‘Mickey Mouse’ concept that follows one from early childhood until death. All interventions that are for this reason directed either at persons or situations, constellations of persons and circumstances and are described as risks could be attributed to prevention.

It is worth emphasising that, when using the term prevention, we should be precise in meaning, since the objective of prevention is to prevent the occurrence of unwanted behaviours and offer a child enough resources and support in the form of positive behaviours.

The influence of different fields of science and practice on the development of prevention resulted in a wide spectrum of forms of preventive action. Further, some of the classification possibilities of prevention will be taxonomically presented by object, function, and time dimension.

Classification of Prevention

Classifications by Areas and Target Groups. The important differentiation of preventive concepts is linked to the question in which area someone, or something, has been averted, frightened, driven away, hindered, suppressed, avoided, pushed away, diminished,

reformed, integrated, controlled, disciplined, protected, supported, assured, insured, rejected, redirected, improved, substituted, or left in peace. It is essentially a distinction depending on whether the object of prevention is an act or fact by itself, or whether prevention is focused on the doer or the perpetrator (Bauer, 2005).

The character of the prevention phenomenon is directed at the process goal itself where it has the intention of bringing about change; that is, altering future events in the sense of restricting, reducing, channelling, or preventing an unwanted future.

Classifications by target groups differ a lot. Target groups are differentiated by age, sex, social belonging, objective, type of prevention, etc. (Bauer, 2005; Olk, 1995).

Differentiation by Function. Prevention strategies are based on changes in people, social positions, and situations. Within the prevention differentiation by function, we may find a preventive function, i.e. how to design, plan, and implement a preventive activity which will not do harm in a modern risk society. Unpleasant, disturbing, and risk elements need to be removed from particular sectors, or from the society as a whole, and at the same time risk factors need to be removed or channelled (Bauer, 2005; Olk, 1995).

Classifications by Time Dimension. Classifications of prevention by time dimension have been derived from a medical model of prevention. We differentiate between primary prevention (focused on the whole population), secondary prevention (early diagnoses), and tertiary prevention (rehabilitation). Primary prevention includes all measures that enable improvement of social circumstances and conditions. We talk about secondary prevention in connection to individuals or groups who already need help. It treats unwanted development and at the same time proceeds with prevention or at least aims at harm reduction. The differentiation of educational support measures at the level of secondary prevention is merely symbolic (Bauer, 2005; Olk, 1995).

Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Prevention in Primary School

Already at lower class level the teachers all too often give up on trying to reach those individual students who exhibit maladaptive behaviour or withdraw into their inner world. In order to prevent the phenomenon of indifference in school it is necessary to define criteria indicating that something is amiss with a child. Retrospectively, teachers often formulate their perceptions in terms of “we noticed something”, “it could be seen”, “it was not as it could have been if”, etc. There is a lack of systematic elaboration of experiences and perceptions that detect certain indicative warning signs in time, as well as goal-oriented well-functioning strategies, and transparent experiences in order to solve the students’ difficulties more effectively.

Prevention is an inflated miracle remedy for bad and expensive consequences named “behavioural disturbances”. What meaning should this term convey in order to be used sensibly in the framework of prevention and school indifference? Which target and age groups should be addressed and which criteria can be successful in finding the adequate approach to prevent disengagement from school? What should be included in substantive goals and relevant practical measures to remove the flowery preventive rhetoric (Böllert, 2001)? What is prevention? A dividing line between prevention, intervention, and curative strategies is not easily established.

Primary Prevention. Positive behaviour support comes from behaviouristic approaches, which want to improve the opportunities in school, family and the community by creating a more efficient environment. The background from which a child comes enhances the adequacy or integration of procedures validated through research on the environment in which the educational process takes place. Attention is focused on creating the forms of support at the primary (in schools), secondary (in classrooms), and tertiary (individual) level for better performance regarding the way of life (personal, medical, social, family, business, recreational) for all children and young people in order to reduce the influence, function, and importance of behavioural difficulties and to increase functionality of the desired behaviour (Melzer, 2006). We want to prevent serious behavioural deviations that we read about in newspapers or watch on television: violence among students, violence against teachers, thefts, abuses, bullying, drug abuse, etc. Research shows that efforts to prevent those serious issues are more successful if both the home environment and school fully support adoption and use of professionally implemented methods. The procedures which satisfy these criteria include awareness raising and incentives for students who follow the basic rules that reinforce adequate behaviours such as “be reliable”, “be responsible” or “be polite”. To be reliable means to stay within the set boundaries and follow the rules of the game. This means to keep one’s hands and legs to oneself and walk on the right side in the hallways and on the staircases (Holtapples et al., 2006).

Secondary Prevention. Secondary prevention offers intensive and goal-directed interventions to support those children who do not react to the invested efforts at the primary prevention level. Interventions within secondary prevention are more intensive since there are fewer students at risk of developing more serious behaviour difficulties and who, therefore, need more support. Usual procedures in secondary prevention include small groups of students or simple individualized forms of help. Among group forms are procedures like social skills training clubs, check in/check out, behaviour intervention plans, etc. (Melzer, 2006).

Tertiary Prevention. Tertiary prevention aims at the needs of an individual who shows the signs of more severe or persistent behavioural difficulties. Research has shown the effectiveness of the positive behaviour support, including those behaviours that appear dangerous, very negative, hinder learning, and result in social and educational exclusion. The positive behaviour support is used as a behaviour modification method for children with a very wide spectrum of characteristics, including autism, emotional difficulties, developmental difficulties or children who have not been diagnosed, but for whom it is obvious that they are not able to control their difficulties.

Tertiary prevention is most successful in cases when positive primary (school) and secondary (classroom) approaches are present. The implementation of effective support and individual support has to be carried out in an integrated and co-operative way. The individuals concerned, people who know them best, and those who participate in achieving positive changes should be involved in the process and work as a team in supporting adequate behaviour (Melzer, 2006).

Support should be tailored to the needs and circumstances. An integrative approach of understanding and responding to behaviour should be included. The objective

of tertiary prevention is to reduce the problem of disruptive behaviour and increase the student's abilities to adapt, and create the opportunities for quality of life improvement (Elsner, 2007).

Examples of Good Practice

The purpose of this contribution is to present some possible forms of prevention using a method of good practice examples. As is well known in the method of social pedagogy, there are no good or bad methods or approaches, but rather more or less committed practitioners for whom it is necessary to provide enough knowledge and possible choices so they can choose the one best suited to the child's or adolescent's specific situation.

Identifying Risk Cases. Sensitivity to the indicators of school indifference and rejection forms the central part of preventive work. Education experts, together with the social pedagogical counselling service, have to focus their attention on individuals who behave differently in school, are dissatisfied, and who actively or passively show their opposition and turn their backs on school culture. The identified case has to be treated properly and with refined feeling in order to make sure a child feels safe and not rejected during the expansion of relationships when gradually all important subjects (the child, parents, and teachers) are invited to participate. The following cases can make a significant contribution to better perception and greater inclusion of at-risk individuals in a constructive school culture (Braun & Wetzel, 2000).

Change of Achievement Criteria or Thinking Differently During Class. A very clear but, at the same time, very hard criterion involves shifts within the level of school requirements. School grades and requirements can be an indicator of a child's interests and strengths that can enable them to find success and also raise their marks in other subjects.

School attendance can be just as important an indicator. Not only absenteeism but also justified non-attendance can be an important indicator that reminds us that something is going on with a child. The child's or parents' problems, fear of going to school, fear for personal safety on the way home, fear of classmates, etc., are often overlooked indicators that something is happening to the child (Braun & Wetzel, 2000).

Relationships and Social Behaviour. The relationship, contact, and pedagogical eros are the cornerstones of the child's involvement in the educational process. Without a candid and loving relationship, as Gogala (2005) says, this is not possible. Experience suggests that this is indeed the case. For that very reason it is important how the child experiences their pedagogical leader and how the pedagogical leader finds sources in the child and themselves for the child. The more the children are engaged in a relationship with a teacher during the educational process, the smaller the chance that they will feel unaccepted or misunderstood during difficult moments, since this kind of emotional attachment can be of crucial importance for their persistence. The understanding of children's gender socialisation is of equal importance (Gogala, 2005).

Monitoring Students' Integration. It is important to observe the child's behaviour during the process of integration in the classroom and difficulties with (or fear of) classmates which may arise and which may be just as important a reason for children to show

withdrawn behaviour, appear disinterested, and lose connection to school. Children who repeat a grade or those who had to change schools are particularly relevant here. These children should be monitored with special attention (Braun & Wetzel, 2000).

Individual Assistance and Development Plan. Identification and initiative development have to be the central interests of the teacher who offers a rule to a child within a certain time frame, also after class in an unstructured situation and thus provides enough support and help for the child to acquire adequate knowledge and motivation for further work or a new beginning. With skilful pedagogical leadership, the teacher can encourage other classmates to become part of the process, since children rarely seek help from social pedagogues or other education counsellors. In this context, it is important to use the concept of positive discrimination in order to avoid stigmatization.

Preventive projects also include development plans. These plans develop together with a child as they participate in a goal-setting process in which all participants reach a consensus. It has to be taken into consideration which goals the child can achieve on their own, for which goals they will need professional help, and in what way the goals or accomplishments will be evaluated. Steps are determined and the child can see a certain milestone is achieved. Within the framework of these arrangements, it is necessary to achieve a high level of coherence between school, child, and parents (Kupffer, 1995).

Improving the Climate in the Classroom. School should be a place where children and adolescents with their life situations and difficulties are treated with seriousness and responsibility. These difficulties play an important role within these complex and difficult situations, since they are anchored in the school context in the long run. It is about developing additional offers within school and classes where a child can feel and reinforce their sense of self-worth (Leonhardt, 2002). Offers and cooperation between the children, school, and parents in daily school life should be designed stimulative in order to prevent a child from experiencing any unpleasant feelings or fear. The school should strive to encourage the development of social competence in children.

Cooperation with Parents. The task of the school and educational staff is to seek and nourish a good and intensive contact with parents. An important starting point is cooperation in the form of partnership. Parents should be involved in daily school life and, in this process, the parents of children who find it difficult to fulfil school requirements must not be overlooked. These parents often withdraw themselves also due to their own lack of social competence. Parents are an important factor in including school in the local environment. They can provide variety in daily school life and are an important source for school quality and its climate.

Pedagogy Should not be Understood as a Problem Solving Instrument. Kupffer (1981) wonders if school can continue the designed school socialisation without acknowledging social pedagogy. Can social pedagogy build a counterpoise exactly where the thankless task in the form of help functions occurs and from this tension creates transparent and accessible circumstances? It would undoubtedly be beneficial for school and social pedagogy to agree on what society really expects from them and which of these expectations are within their competence.

Transparency of the Selection and Achievement Mechanisms. Böhm and Böttger (1981, p. 63) say that: "... school is an institution with people who work under chronic violence of success and under the pressure of legitimacy." The didactics of every educational initiative states: the more humane school wants to be and to set clear general ideas about success, the more it is itself subjected to the pressure of success. Social pedagogy will inevitably have to experience this necessity in school as well. In order to be unbiased it has to face and overcome it every day. "In this kind of atmosphere a specific mental state of the student starts to reproduce. School represents the centre of everything to the student, their existence equals school existence, and whatever they do will spur or hinder their schooling. The student is the prototype of a one-dimensional person, and their parents also let them feel that way" (Böhm & Böttger, 1981, p. 62). The non-quantifiable human qualities in such a school are unimportant. "School as a secondary socialising field is a nonsensical thesis because persisting with an existing state veils true value-based principles of the society" (Böhm & Böttger, 1981, p. 67). In the case that school did not primarily produce only achievements but also convictions or adequate behaviour it would be possible to imagine which behaviour is deviant. This or that measuring tool is not of decisive importance. It is important that we develop, as Böhm and Böttger say, a type of 'unprofiled' mediocre individual. However, despite all the fears parents are proud if their child is successful. Anger towards school appears only when their child is failing in school. This silent solidarity of parents and the greater part of society indicates that school is set as an instrument of objective disciplining and that strict upbringing or discipline have roots in past eras (Struck, 1995). This way school causes pain and we experience it in a negative way.

The task of a critical social pedagogue, as Kupffer (1995) states, is to influence narrowmindedness, its one-dimensional fixation. It is worthwhile noting that in the adult's view of school, there are perhaps remnants of submission to authority and an undemocratic way of thinking. This can be a straightforward help to present day importance of learning in school – the reality of many parents' and children's lives.

Confrontational Pedagogy

In addition to concepts like dispute-settlement, mediation, social skills training, etc., confrontational pedagogy offers new, supplementary and follow-on conceptual and practical outlines for various behaviours. Within the school programme, together with classmates and teachers, students learn, develop, and train peaceful and creative behavioural patterns for dealing with aggressive or any other inadequate behaviour.

In everyday interactions and confrontational conversations, the confrontational attitude of the pedagogues mediates always agreed and calm "civilisation standard" of co-existence that also requires consistency. The highest objective of the confrontational plan is preventing victims of violence and discontentedness in school (Koch Laugwitz & Büchner, 2005).

The concept of confrontational pedagogy consists of the following elements:

- The theory of confrontational pedagogy;

- Methods and concepts for conducting classes and school culture;
- Introduction to the structure and methods of coolness-training (students and teachers learn how to keep cool heads and behave calmly amidst burdensome situations).

According to the assumptions of confrontative pedagogy the basic strategies for dealing with inadequate behaviour are: confrontational conversation (structure, environment, conversation techniques, training opportunities), setting boundaries, and work and life with aggressive behaviour (responding to threatening situations, fear and helplessness versus aggressive behaviour, controlled interventions for dealing with aggressive behaviour). The methods of confrontative pedagogy that are most often used in working with students are introduced below.

Successful Repetition Through Cooperation. The work concepts are aimed at minimizing the quota of repeaters. The danger for these children is that their integration in the new environment is limited and thereby we impede their emotional and social development. It is about the networking concept between primary and vocational schools. This is done in such a way that teachers from vocational schools teach in the upper level of primary schools. For example, in our country teachers from the upper level come to teach in the lower level of primary school (Melzer, 2006).

Classes Can Eliminate Disruptions. The thesis is based on three principles which should be observed in every school and classroom:

- Every student has the right to learn undisturbed;
- Every teacher has the right to teach without disruptions;
- Everyone has to respect the rights of others!

Disturbing others and causing disruptions indicates lack of collegiality and disrespect.

Training enables more time for effective learning, taking responsibility for one's own actions, exiting from the escalatory spiral in conflict situations, and professionally monitored behaviour reflections that provide a basis for change (Melzer, 2006).

Dealing with Disruptions, Conflicts, Aggression and Violence in School. Conflicts and disruptions arise in daily school life because of different reasons and have various dimensions. Different approaches regarding conflicts should enable alternative paths that lead to immediate resolutions.

Respect and evaluation of values are the fundamental premises of this kind of work that includes social skills training, systemic family therapy, educational role-playing, and mediation (Koch Laugwitz & Büchner, 2005). The central part emphasises experience, learning and relationship building (Kury & Lerchenmüller, 1983).

Experiential learning. We have to practice social skills and competence at school and during classes if we want to impart this to students. Experiential learning in the classroom and further education is based on: comprehensiveness, voluntary nature, self-responsibility, mutual respect, and learning through experience instead of passive adoption of information (Schilling 1995).

Gender-aware pedagogy and reflexive co-education. What tasks do today's children and adolescents have to face in their development into women and men and how should they reflect in students' behaviour in school? All results from different research have

shown how important it is to answer these questions and how important is gender-aware schoolwork, which requires a careful look at goals and methods.

Nonviolent communication. Rosenberg (2003) developed a nonviolent communication model that reflects Carl Rogers's insights. We can develop it in schools, educational institutions, and youth homes in order to prevent conflicts and enable readiness for cooperation.

It is based on a four-step model: observation without judgement, evaluation, and assessment; identifying emotions we feel during the observation; formulation of needs which lie behind these emotions; phrasing a request on what everyone can do to express or fulfil their need. It includes two parts: honestly expressing ourselves to others according to the four steps; empathic and active listening.

Detection of School Mobbing. Mobbing is not a new phenomenon in school, but rather a phenomenon that is already well known to teachers. It is difficult to distinguish between "normal" teasing, verbal attacks, and ruthlessness among students, on the one hand, and mobbing, on the other hand. It is important that we do not dramatize or minimize mobbing; we have to promptly identify subtle forms of violence in order to adequately deal with them.

It is necessary to increase sensitivity for mobbing detection in order to be able to distinguish between what mobbing is and what it is not, what forms it can take, and what measures we have at our disposal (Olk, 1995).

Mediation in School. Conflicts, disagreements, quarrels, and contrariness are permanent features of life. Conflicts are usually unpleasant and we want to avoid them. However, life experience teaches us that conflicts are not necessarily something negative, unwanted, or even dangerous, but may instead constitute a basic force for improving relationships, knowing ourselves and others, and a basis for growth and development. Conflicts break out spontaneously and they can manifest themselves in violent form.

From the perspective of constructive conflict resolution with the help of school and peer mediation, we would like to shift the discourse from the field of violence to the area of conflict and thus a real possibility for preventive action against school violence may open up. Prevention against violence in school is in learning how to reach creative and clear dispute settlements. We can neither avoid conflicts nor is it constructive to do so. It is therefore important that all "involved parties" in the school structure learn this way of dealing with conflicts as prevention against violence. It is a move from consequences to causes. Mediation presents a cooperative and consensual way of dispute settlement within which both parties look for possible solutions together with the help of a third, neutral person who helps and leads them through the procedure of particular techniques. During mediation the participants explain their view of events, they elucidate their wishes, needs, expectations, and listen to the opposite side and try to understand their standpoint. The integration of conflict management by means of mediation and its exercising prepares students for life in society, reduces tensions, and presents a way to normalise of interpersonal relationships (Lisec Metelko, 2005).

Social Skills Training for Students. The overarching objective is that lesson planning includes social and emotional learning. The training is focused on constructive conflict resolution, strengthening a student's feelings of self-worth and self-confidence in order

to form relationships towards themselves and others in a positive manner. We should not learn socioemotional behaviour merely coincidentally and situationally. It is necessary to train targeted constructive social behaviour at an early stage in life and within a structured programme.

The integral parts of such a programme are: experiencing and learning how to evaluate dissimilarities among classmates; recognizing and evaluating one's own strengths and weaknesses; putting oneself in the place of others; recognizing and labelling the emotions; giving feedback in a respectful manner; looking at a problem from different perspectives; learning how to cooperate (Schanzenbächer, 2003).

Communication Training for Teachers and Students. A lot of conflicts, disruptions, and aggressions arise because of misunderstandings and poor communication. This training uses the following starting points: verbal and non-verbal communication; fundamental aspects of communication; encoding and decoding messages; body language; vocal tonality; body movements and speech pacing (Schanzenbächer, 2003).

Encouraging Self-Responsible Thinking. Class disruptions can put serious strain on daily school life. Most class disruptions emerge in a non-reflected way. The concept of "self-responsible thinking" wants to demonstrate to students the possible consequences of their actions, make them aware of them, and make them consider the consequences of their behaviour.

We have put two goals at the forefront: class disruptions have to be prevented; students have to be confronted with the possibility of taking responsibility for their actions and lesson objectives as well as taking into account the rights of others.

The above guidelines denote an undisrupted classroom environment. If a student disrupts a lesson, they can go to the training room where they will think about their behaviour, together with an expert and look for new conflict resolution strategies. Students can return to the classroom only after signing an agreement on alternative behaviour regarding similar conflict situations in the future.

This concept presents a combination of a constructive method for developing responsibility and students' ability to make decisions about the development of a good work environment in the classroom. Such a model requires consensus between parents and teachers because hiring additional teachers increases costs (van Dieken et al., 2004).

Decomposition of Stress, Relief and Concentration. In daily school life teachers are repeatedly stressed, especially during class disruptions and conflicts, and consequently often respond inadequately. Teachers need to identify stressors and learn new ways of coping that will give them security, stability, and enough saved energy to lead a classroom.

It is important to work on the following: recognizing one's own Achilles' heel; timely identification of stressors; self-centering exercises; mind-body stress reduction techniques: methods that enable detachment and distance; conserving strength under pressure and in the face of defiance; classroom relaxation activities (Zalewska, 2005).

Dispute Settlement, Implementation of Help –Monitoring –Aftercare. Conflicts arise everywhere there are people. A solution is not always fair but they can be resolved professionally. School mediation is a concept of developing a constructive conflict culture.

Students are trained to enter into a conflict situation as an impartial third party in order to find satisfactory solutions for all parties involved.

Such an approach unburdens teachers and enables students to acquire independence and personal responsibility. The topics that arise from that concept are: standards in education; dispute settlement models; resource assessment; involvement of school environment; involvement of parents; on the spot planning of concrete steps; evaluation of the work done; obtaining full knowledge of the possible consequences; likelihood of recurrent events (van Dieken et al., 2004).

Collegial Case Counselling. Collegial case counselling is an instrument for working through disruptions and cases of conflict in a collegial atmosphere. Unlike supervision, this concept advocates collegial counselling, which takes place at a board of fellow members that is, after initial training, led independently of an outside expert.

The method is suitable for groups and teams of teachers in addressing the following areas: classroom disruptions and discipline problems; confrontational situations with students; uncertainty in decision making, etc.

The objectives of the presented concept include: professionalization of teachers and teaching, unburdening an individual through development of empathy and understanding, and efficient collective consulting work (van Dieken et al., 2004).

Setting Boundaries: Self-Assertion in Everyday Professional Life. In daily school life teachers are constantly confronted with difficult situations that require boundary setting. For example: A teacher has a valid reason to send a student out of class but the student defies them. A student greets a teacher with "Hi, baby." A substitute teacher encounters utter chaos in a classroom. A teacher suffering from long-term burnout has a task to organise a school event.

Every teacher develops coping strategies to deal with these or similar situations more or less effectively, and sets boundaries with greater or lesser effort. Teachers need to be aware of the strategies they use, reflect upon them, and make a thoughtful assessment of them in order to learn new approaches that do not require so much energy. The ability to set boundaries is an important prerequisite for teachers to perform their work without a risk of burnout. This concept includes five areas: body language and bodywork; techniques that enable detachment and unburdening; principles of self-assertion; counselling supervision of concrete cases; analysis for improvement of the structural conditions in school (van Dieken et al., 2004).

The Role of the Social Pedagogue in the Prevention of Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties in School-Age Children

Recommendations for working with children with emotional and behavioural difficulties include the following educational programmes: educational prevention programmes; compensatory programmes; personality integration programmes and social integration programmes; curative programmes (medical and psychotherapeutic procedures) (Škoflek et al., 2004).

Emotional and behavioural difficulties are distinctly reactive phenomena depending on inner (mood) or external (classmates, teachers, school subjects or lesson content, classroom climate, etc.) stimulation.

The formation and development of emotional and behavioural difficulties can be divided into four levels of severity. The first level includes occasional behaviour that is not in line with expectations, but teachers are able to identify, understand, and deal with it by themselves. The second level includes occasional occurrences and difficulties that hinder, disrupt or disrupt teachers, and they have to interrupt the learning process to devote their attention to disruptive students (if teachers can successfully deal with the problem) or they have to call on professional assistance (a social pedagogue), etc. The third level includes frequent occurrences, difficulties, and disturbances that disrupt and hinder teachers' pedagogical work, and teachers do not know how or are not able to deal with them alone, and therefore need support from other school or outside experts. The fourth level includes occurrences, difficulties, disturbances, and offences that neither teachers (according to their assessment) nor school counsellors know how or are able to deal with. The student has to be referred to specialized forms of support or has to be temporarily excluded from the classroom (individual classes, home schooling, residential group home or youth home) (Škoflek et al., 2004).

Manifestations of behavioural and personality disorders in school vary. They can affect:

- *classes* (chatting during classes, failure to follow the teacher's explanations, playing during classes, doing schoolwork or homework irregularly, sloppiness, forgetfulness, losing things, lateness, truancy, etc.);
- *relationships with classmates and teachers* (clowning, quarrelling, teasing, insulting, intimidating, placing the blame on someone or something else, ostentatiousness, boasting, aggressive behaviour or evasiveness, seeking various alternative sources for satisfaction like smoking, alcohol consumption, or drug experimentation, etc.);
- *(non)performance* (continuous evasion of schoolwork, openly rejecting learning, teachers, and school, general indifference, absenteeism, partial or total school failure) (Škoflek et al., 2004).

Working with a child with emotional and behavioural difficulties is very specific. These children often show average intelligence and are able to attain the minimal knowledge standards. Since difficulties resulting from antisocial behaviour usually arise in school, this requires additional knowledge and training from school experts. School as a possible cause of the deepening of behavioural difficulties is not appropriately qualified to teach such children and thus the manifestation of problems continues. Teachers and other school experts essentially follow the instructions of social pedagogues, but in practice these instructions cannot be fully applied. Prevention of behavioural difficulties is, therefore, left to teachers and other school experts. The school has the *Rules on elementary school students' rights and duties*², which provides sanctions for minor and serious violations,

² Official Journal of the Republic of Slovenia No. 31/1996, 15/1998, 75/2004. Available at www.uradni-list.si (31/1-2006).

but the school may nevertheless not be able to completely adhere to the Rules in the case of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties as disciplinary measures do not incite students to think about improving their behaviour.

Teachers, social pedagogues, and other school counsellors have to act in close interaction. They should not stay trapped in the hierarchical school order – after-school care teachers, lower-grade teachers, upper-grade teachers, school counsellors (psychologist, pedagogue, social worker), principal assistant, principal; as it does not facilitate constructive relationships and working atmosphere (co-decisions, thematic analysis, structural questions, etc.) but rather generates fear in individuals of being exposed which leads to an undemocratic perception of life and causes frustrations. “The envisaged professionalization of teachers covers areas of decision-making and touches on social pedagogical perspectives. Just as decision-making competences are empty without professional competencies so are professional competencies blind without decision-making competencies” (Kupffer, 1995, p. 103).

A teacher and a social pedagogue can only gradually develop in the dialectical process and interaction through mutual understanding, cooperation, and decision-making.

A social pedagogue has to contribute to the revitalisation of neglected areas in school. This means preparing after-school activities, reviving leisure time, offering various individual and group activities, helping with homework, school social work, counselling, maintaining contacts with parents, executions of projects, and including different enterprises. However, it is not the role of the social pedagogues to fill every void and to educationally finalise every phenomenon. Social pedagogues are not a kind of entertainers who keep guests amused. During counselling, they should also be aware of the gap between the states of what ‘ought’ to be and what ‘is’.

A social pedagogue has to help raise the awareness of every participant in school. They have to master the theoretical tools, try to weaken nonsensical superficial judgments about school (e.g. students do not learn enough nowadays), and make the public aware of the social background of the students’ present existence. They have to figure out the mechanisms of exclusion and discuss these issues with teachers and the school administration.

A social pedagogue has to be willing and able to make decisions together with the teachers. It is important that we test the system of exclusion and that we actively participate in conferences and councils where important matters and the fates of students are discussed.

Conclusion

There are many opportunities in every school for prevention. We put emphasis on some of them: communication centres (tea rooms, playrooms), hobby rooms, quiet rooms, colouring corners, chat rooms, trips, street-based work, shared interest groups (skaters, roller-blade skaters, snowboarders, etc.), experiential pedagogy, various courses or help in more attractive forms, changes in teaching style, openness of the school, hanging out after school, etc.

This is how a lively dynamic may develop (Schilling, 1995). Its outcomes are: resolving conflicts within the learning field, conditions that define life and learning in and outside school and, finally, a transformed school. Interests, needs, abilities, and skills are encouraged. Young people can experience success and see the effects and at the same time, everything takes place in a fun and joyful atmosphere by encouraging imagination and creativity. Active participation is guaranteed. This kind of work is designed for groups or individuals. However, we can encounter obstacles. Work is hard, there are no ready-made solutions, it can be filled with conflicts and disruptions. Even rewards can be inadequate.

Böhm and Böttger (1981) believe that social pedagogues should build on establishing intensive contact. Undoubtedly, in these cases, afterschool hours provide the ideal time for unburdening and relaxation. Children like to attend this kind of events, not only as a way of spending their leisure time, but also to confide their troubles. Yet, we have to critically ask ourselves, how many behaviourally different and aggressive children remain outside these settings?

Preventive work offers a broad range of options. In this paper we have presented some possibilities, especially a way of thinking, which is of vital importance. Understanding the child's whole situation is important. The more intensive the set relationships, the more we will know about a child, and the more protective factors we will be able to set up. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that the child will be able to socialize as the established school system expects of them.

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ПРЕВЕНЦИЈА У ОСНОВНОЈ ШКОЛИ КРОЗ ДИСКУРСИВНУ ПАРАДИГМУ

Апстракт Превенција у основној школи је увек актуелна тема. У овом раду се истражују различити теоријски дискурси на примарном, секундарном и терцијарном нивоу превенције који осликавају различите превенције. Посебна пажња посвећена је социјално-педагошкој концептуализацији превенције у основној школи, где индиферентност представља посебну категорију којој треба посветити више пажње. У раду су представљени различити модели превенције у школском систему, са посебним фокусом на рано откривање, критеријуме селекције у школама који се често прате само површно, важност педагошког односа и рада са родитељима, као и оно што је потребно за побољшање школске климе. Даље, представљене су основне препоруке конфронтационе педагогије, као и конкретни модели превенције и начин размишљања који омогућава проналажење образовних модела за децу која имају потешкоћа, а да при том не буду повређена ни она нија група.

Кључне речи: конфронтациона педагогија, емоционалне и психичке потешкоће, превенција, социјална педагогија

ПРЕВЕНТИВНЫЕ МЕРЫ В ОСНОВНОЙ ШКОЛЕ ПОСРЕДСТВОМ ДИСКУРСИВНОЙ ПАРАДИГМЫ

Резюме Превентивные меры в основной школе всегда актуальны. В настоящей статье рассматриваются различные теоретические дискурсы на первичном, вторичном и третичном уровнях превенции, которые отражают различные подходы к превенции. Анализируются социально-педагогические концептуализации превенции в основной школе, где индифферентность является особой проблемой и требует пристального внимания. Представлены различные модели превенции в школьной системе, а особое внимание уделяется раннему выявлению проблем, критериям отбора в школах, за которыми часто следят лишь поверхностно, важности педагогического отношения и работы с родителями и всему, способствующему улучшению школьного климата. Кроме того, приводятся основные предположения конфронтационной педагогики, а также конкретные модели превентивных мер, способы и направления работы, позволяющие находить образовательные модели для детей с трудностями в развитии, не навредив при этом ни этим, ни другим детям.

Ключевые слова: конфронтационная педагогика, эмоциональные и поведенческие трудности, превентивные меры, социальная педагогика