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Students' Pedagogical Counselling in the Science Learning Context

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Abstract

In the current context, where school faces a multitude of psychosocial issues, the pedagogical counselling activities have become an indispensable prerequisite, related to almost every aspect of the educational system or learning process. Starting from the premise that one of the fundamental tasks of the pedagogical /school counselling work is offered by providing students with a range of effective learning techniques, in this study we intend to customize this aspect, taking into account the training approach developed within Science disciplines.

As such, the purpose of this study is to capture the impact that the pedagogical counselling process has on the optimization of the learning activities related to Science area (Chemistry, Physics and Biology). Thus, we undertook an investigative approach, from a sample of over 1.000 Romanian secondary school students, as indirect beneficiaries of the teacher training programme "*PROFILES - Education through Sciences*". The questionnaire administered to those students envisaged a number of issues concerning: the attractiveness of the Science lessons, their impact on the affective, behavioural and learning style, valorisation of their effectiveness in efficient instructional models, the importance of the lessons from the perspective of determining their skills for everyday life, specific pedagogical relations that are structured in such teaching approaches, etc.

The data processed from the questionnaires, correlated with the results gathered from the focus group discussions, allowed us to formulate pertinent conclusions regarding the facilitator role of the school counselling activities, in terms of learning management disciplines within the specific Science content.

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1. Introduction

The *psycho-pedagogical counselling*, also called *school or educational counselling*, represents a special type of counselling, realized in the context of the educational institutions, whose direct or indirect beneficiaries are the pupils/pre-school pupils, their parents and the teachers. The counselling approach can be realized both by specialists in psycho-pedagogical assistance or school counsellors and by every teacher, in relation to the psycho-pedagogical and methodological skills available to him or her.

The main purpose of the counselling activities carried out with students is to help them have a correct perception of the situation they are faced with and to find by themselves optimal solutions for solving it. The counsellor does not need to suggest solutions for the student, but needs to guide him in such a way as “*to make him/her capable to help himself/herself, to understand both his/her own self and the surrounding reality. Consequently, the task of the school counsellor is not to give advice, but to help the person in need to become able to solve the problems he/she is faced with by himself/herself*” (Moțoc, Popa, & Petrescu, 1999).

The Romanian psychologist Adriana Băban considers that the “*fundamental goal of educational counselling is the optimal psycho-social functioning of the person/group*”. In order to realize this very comprehensive fundamental goal, she identified three auxiliary goals: promoting health and welfare (physically and psychologically); personal development (through self-knowledge, optimal inter-personal relations, decisional capacity, positive and creative attitude, etc.); preventing undesirable situations such as: negative affective disposition, getting involved in conflicts, difficulties in solving certain problems, psychosomatic dysfunctions etc. (Băban, 2001)

From the perspective of the time needed to turn them into practice, there can be identified: *short term goals*, which suppose solving some urgent problems or going over some current obstacles the student is faced with, and *long term goals*, which involve providing the student with a set of methods and creating some skills allowing the student to efficiently solve his/her existential problems.

2. Basic functions of psycho-pedagogical counselling

In relation to those goals, one can identify the basic functions of psycho-pedagogical counselling which are:

- the *knowledge function* - identifying the problems of the person in need of counselling and his/her personality features;
- the *self-knowledge function* - identifying the personality features, some of them completely unknown, by the counselled person;
- the *formative function* - supporting and stimulating the process of progressive development of all the skills available to the individual;
- the *informative function* - which involves obtaining information by the counselled person concerning different aspects of reality, which can contribute to the solving of the problem the individual is faced with;
- the *school and professional orientation function* - which deals with solving certain specific problems, related to the choice of a school or a profession.

The contents approached in the context of psycho-pedagogical counselling included in the curricular area called *Counselling and Guidance* are structured on five thematic modules which remain the same at all school levels: *self-knowledge and personal development*; *communication and social skills*; *information and learning management*; *career planning*; *life style quality* (according to the Order of the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research O.M. No. 5286 / 09.10.2006). The specific goals of those activities, but which can be realized in the context of all the educational approaches, aim at: developing the students' self-knowledge skills and the inter-knowledge skills in the class-group; facilitating interpersonal relations in the school group; forming and developing the students' conscience and moral-civic behaviour; familiarizing the students with the norms of social life in general and of the school life regime in particular; forming their skills for solving difficult or conflict situations; optimizing school performances through the acquisition of some efficient learning techniques; identifying and turning to good use the students' skills and interests for an optimal orientation of their career;

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