

Educational counseling in Romania and Turkey – comparative aspects

Monica Moraru

Ovidius University of Constanta, Romania
andrada_mira@yahoo.com

Abstract: Educational counseling, an integral part of the educator-educated pedagogical correlation, is constituted as a means of self-knowledge and development of the student's personality. It is a special experience of communication and search, a way to optimize interpersonal relationships, to learn positive behavioral and attitudinal models, a way to support students who face educational, emotional, social difficulties. It is an important factor in preventing difficulties that can hinder the mental development of the student - difficulties in communication, behavior, school adaptation, physical, emotional and mental health etc. The present study proposes a analysis on the specific aspects of educational counseling in Romania and Turkey. The study presents the following analysis criteria: institutions that coordinate the activity of educational counseling; objectives of educational counseling; services provided; topics covered; methods of work.

Keywords: EDUCATIONAL COUNSELING, PEDAGOGICAL RELATIONSHIP, OBJECTIVES OF EDUCATIONAL COUNSELING

1. Introduction

Educational counseling is a special experience of communication and search, a way to optimize interpersonal relationships, to learn positive behavioral and attitudinal models, a way to support students who face educational, emotional, social difficulties. Integral part of the educator-educated pedagogical correlation, the educational counseling is an important factor in preventing difficulties that can hinder the mental development of the student - difficulties in communication, behavior, school adaptation, physical, emotional and mental health etc. The educational counseling influences the development of the student's personality, facilitates the free and creative expression of school and professional options and decisions, maximizes intellectual, emotional and volitional availability, changes maladaptive attitudes and behaviors, facilitates the self-knowledge, training social skills favorable to teamwork, cooperation and collaboration, mastering effective learning techniques etc.

The present study proposes a analysis on the specific aspects of educational counseling in Romania. The study presents the following analysis criteria: institutions that coordinate the activity of educational counseling; objectives of educational counseling; services provided; topics covered; methods of work.

2. Educational counseling in Romania – institutions, objectives, services, topics, methods

In Romania, the educational counseling activity takes place in the school, during the counseling and personal development classes. Also, in the School Cabinets of Psychopedagogical Assistance, subordinated to the County Center for Assistance and Educational Resources (CJRAE).

Starting with the 1998-1999 school year, the Ministry of Education proposed the introduction in the National Curriculum of the *Counseling and Orientation* curricular area, for primary, secondary and high school education. The learning contents for the subjects of this curricular area - *Personal Development, Counseling and Personal / Vocational Development* - are grouped in the following five thematic modules:

1. *Self-knowledge and personal development*
2. *Communication and social skills*
3. *Information and learning management*
4. *Career planning*
5. *Lifestyle*

The proposed topics are approached by teachers for primary and preschool education, teachers / counselors, teachers of psychology. The following attitudes and values are capitalized: respect, self-confidence and trust in others; recognizing the uniqueness of each person; receptivity to the emotions of others; valuing interpersonal relationships; critical and selective capitalization of information; adaptation and openness to new types of learning; motivation and flexibility in the elaboration of one's own educational and professional route; responsibility and availability for decisions and

actions regarding one's career; interest in lifelong learning in a changing world and in the knowledge society; orientation towards a quality life, now and in the future.

The counseling actions carried out with the class of students should not be confused with the lesson. Educational counseling is not taught, but is done in the form of practical activities. The purpose of educational counseling: to facilitate learning, practicing desirable behaviors. Targeted competencies: effective communication; problems solving and decision making; developing sensitivity for the needs of others; formulating short, medium and long term goals; identification, organization, planning and allocation of resources (time, financial, materials, etc.); obtaining and using information; use of new technologies; personal and career planning etc.

In the School Cabinets of Psychopedagogical Assistance, subordinated to the County Center for Assistance and Educational Resources (CJRAE), psychopedagogical counseling and school guidance services, assistance and qualified counseling are provided to students, parents and teachers. In Romania, the County Centers for Resources and Educational Assistance (CJRAE) coordinates specific educational services provided to children, teachers, parents and community members to ensure access to quality education for all, as well as necessary assistance in this regard.

CJRAE coordinates, monitors and evaluates, at county level, the activity and educational services offered by:

- County Center for Psychopedagogical Assistance (CJAP) and School Cabinets for Psychopedagogical Assistance - school and professional counseling and guidance services for students; information and counseling services for teachers, children, parents, other members of the community; guidance services for initial and continue teacher training; specific therapy services
- Interschool Speech Therapy Center (CLI) and School Speech Therapy Offices Language and Communication Disorders Therapy Services
- Resource Center for Inclusive Education (CREI) - support services and specific therapies for children with special educational needs integrated in mass education
- School Mediator - school mediation services, through the school mediator
- Social Worker - social assistance services, through the social worker

These institutions carry out their activity in collaboration with the Teaching Staff House, the School Inspectorate, the educational institutions, the Employment and Vocational Training Agencies, the County Centers of Preventive Medicine or other institutions with attributions or interests in the field of education, under the methodological guidance of the Ministry of Education.

CJRAE objectives:

- inclusion and maintenance in compulsory education of all children / young people, regardless of their psycho-individual and social peculiarities
- ensuring additional supports necessary for the development of quality education

- informing and advising teachers in order to improve the instructive-educational activity
- involvement of parents in activities specific to an effective relationship: school - family - community

At the beginning of the educational counseling activities, the rules according to which the group of students will work will be established, by mutual agreement - punctuality, mutual respect, respect for the diversity of opinions - theme and objectives pursued. Discussions will be approached in an empathetic, sincere and open manner. Visual contact between participants is very important (circle / semicircle arrangement is considered to be the most appropriate). Within the group, the subjects learn that they are not the only ones who encounter difficulties, who have worries and fears. The emphasis is on interactive work strategies: brainstorming, debate, problematization, role play, simulation, case study, critical thinking techniques, metaphorical exercises, etc. Their role is to facilitate the exchange of information, identification and clarification of problems, resolving misunderstandings, facilitating personal and professional development etc.

Scoring is not used in educational counseling activities. The specific evaluation strategies are: self-evaluation, questionnaires of interests and skills, observation grid, individual and group projects, etc. The evaluation must answer the following questions:

- *What is the level of training and development in students of the competencies specifically proposed through the curriculum for the curricular area Counseling and guidance?*
- *Has the frequency of students' adaptive behaviors to the information received increased?*
- *Are the students able to face the problems they have to solve in order to have a successful socio-professional insertion?*

Unlike Romania, in Turkey, for example, Psychological Counseling and Guidance (PDR) services helps the students better understand himself, to recognize his characteristics, to identify opportunities and options, to make realistic decisions for himself, to improve his potentials, to cope with obstacles and problems etc. The work carried out within this framework is mainly a matter of expertise, but it is not appropriate for a psychological counselor in a school to strive to perform these services alone without involving school personnel. As an important principle of the PDR services, it is necessary to cooperate with the staff in the school so that these services to function efficiently. The understanding and cooperation of the school staff is important.

Psychological testing, vocational career choice, and mental health concerns are currently paramount in defining what counseling is and what counselors do [3]. As in the United States and most other countries, counseling in Turkey began in the schools. Turkey has been making efforts to develop a system of counseling in schools for about fifty years. The first school counselors were primarily teachers, and counseling was a function they performed in addition to their teaching responsibilities. Their major duties involved career and educational counseling.

The main factors that have influenced the emergence of counseling in education settings in Turkey may be listed as follows:

1. Social changes, such as modernization, technological development, democratization, and changing family patterns, have created the need and the desire for counseling in education [3].
2. Counseling has been viewed as an effective means for developing human potential [1].
3. The individual differences emphasized in education have contributed to the emergence of counseling in the schools [4].
4. The counseling services have been seen as a useful means of modernizing and democratizing the school system (T.C MEB Türkiye Egitim Milli Komisyonu Raporu, 1960).

A rapid increase in the appointment of counselors has taken place during the last few years. The Ministry of National Education has also begun to assign counselors trained specifically as counselors to both elementary and secondary schools.

The history of counseling in Turkey is closely related to the history of educational practice and problems in the schools. As each country has its own unique historical background, political system, and economic conditions, any counseling model being appropriated from one society into another will naturally be affected by these factors. Counseling in Turkey is generally perceived as:

1. a corrective and remedial instrument [2]
2. a means of orienting students toward the schools and regulating the manpower that the country requires
3. a means of disciplining and controlling the students in schools
4. a means of special education
5. homeroom and various educational activities being carried out by ordinary teachers

The educational counseling in Turkey is seen as having a key role in the educational process, by encouraging the development of the individual. However, his place in Turkish schools has often been the target of criticism for regulating both the workforce the country needs and the behavior of young people, over whom he has had little control. As democratization, industrialization and urbanization continue to replace traditional cultural models of decision-making, career selection and the provision of human services, awareness of the need for counseling is growing in Turkey. Counseling research, publishing and training programs have advanced and will continue to promote the counseling movement in a way that is necessary in a modern, democratic and humane society.

So, here are some aspects of the educational counseling process in Turkey. We notice, from the analysis of this information, that we obtained from the works provided by a student of a university in Turkey who chose to study in Romania for a year, many similarities between the two countries, in what regarding the purpose of educational counseling activities.

3. Conclusions

The success of educational counseling is given by the active, conscious and responsible involvement of all educational factors in socio-educational and professional development, in awareness of abilities and resources, but also of personal and institutional limits, in creating an optimal psycho-educational environment for personality formation and development.

Focusing on the student's experience, on cultivating qualities and abilities, denotes the concern for valuing the dignity and human quality of those who dedicate their lives to shaping the human personality through education. The teacher has the mission and responsibility to initiate a coherent program of educational experiences that will lead to the personal, educational, professional and social development of the students.

The professional qualities of a good counselor must aim at:

- empathy
- sensitivity to students' problems
- unconditional acceptance of the student - recognition of the intrinsic value of the student's person
- acceptance of interpersonal differences
- honesty, fairness in the relationship with students
- authenticity
- good faith
- sincerity
- seriousness and sobriety, but also joviality
- positive valorization
- high capacity to observe and analyze objectively the specific particularities of the students (attitudes, possibilities, interests, abilities, behaviors, etc.)
- verbal skills (nuanced, persuasive speech)
- ability to send and receive both verbal and nonverbal messages
- continuous training in order to increase the accuracy of students' assessment and self-assessment
- responsibility

- competence in relation to students' problems
- self-imposition of high professional standards and a correct line of ethical conduct

The counselor teacher must live strongly anchored in the present; he must learn to become an expert in human relations, to successfully represent the social community in which he exists, to become a model that overlaps with social desideratum.

In this sense, the initial and continuous training of teachers through methodological-scientific and psycho-pedagogical activities, symposia, conferences, communication sessions, round tables, training programs, etc., is an important pedagogical objective. Through this training, the professional role increases and the roles of the teacher become aware, here and now, but also in perspective.

4. References

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