



"HENRI COANDA"
AIR FORCE ACADEMY
ROMANIA



"GENERAL M.R. STEFANIK"
ARMED FORCES ACADEMY
SLOVAK REPUBLIC

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE of SCIENTIFIC PAPER
AFASES 2013
Brasov, 23-25 May 2013

SCHOOL COUNSELLOR'S PROBLEMS AND DIFFICULTIES IN ROMANIA

Assoc. Prof. Loredana DROBOT PhD *

* Theology, Social Sciences and Education Faculty, "Eftimie Murgu" University of Resita, Resita, Romania,

Abstract: *This paper proposes a summarized analysis of problems and difficulties faced by the Romanian school counsellor. The reference frame is offered by a work sheet obtained from a County Centre of Psychopedagogical Resources and Assistance. The basic idea of this paper is to underline the need of change of the school counsellor's work vision, if the specific of his activity is not very well understood then it is not supposed that he should be offered other activities not connected to his specialty. Essential aspects of Romanian education psychology have been introduced, thus we expect positive consequences in the educational domain*

Keywords: *school counsellor, psychopedagogical counselling, initial and continuous development.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The school counsellor is the education specialist that plans and develops activities of educational counselling, at an individual level and at a group level, so that the pupil can adapt to school environment problems, he implements career educational programs, organizes extra-curricular programs of vocational orientation and promotes health educational programs.

The activities of psychopedagogical counselling are realized by school counsellors in school offices, career orientation offices and in the classroom, in a controlled and secured environment.

An occupational analysis for the occupational role of School Counsellor is found in RWC 2359 (Romania Work Code). [1]

The school counsellor received numerous activities, facing different problems and difficulties. Thus we will present a synthesis of the school counsellor's activities, according to

the Efficiency and Organization Regulation of the County Centre of Psychopedagogical Assistance and of practice offices and according to the Order no. 5418/08.11.2005 of the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth [2], from a Romanian county centre:

1. He ensures the pupils, parents and teachers' informing and counselling on different subjects:

- Knowledge and self-knowledge;
- Pupils' adaptation to school environment;
- The school adaptation to pupils' needs ;
- The optimisation of school-pupils-parents relations.

2. He organizes and promotes the activity of school counselling.

3. He elaborates and organizes programs, projects and activities of prevention and diminishing of factors that determine behaviour disorders, risk behaviours or psychic discomfort through specific methods, procedures and techniques:

- The development of healthy behaviours;

- The prevention of drug consumption and traffic of human beings;
- The prevention of ITS/HIV/AIDS
- The prevention of violence, aggressiveness and deviant/delinquent.

4. He ensures the pupil's psychological examination (realized only by psychologists, according to their authorization received from the Romanian Psychologists College and to their licences obtained in professional tests existent in his office) at his demand, or at the parents, the school management or school inspectorates demands, in the following situations:

- In cases of school failure;
- In cases of school abandon;
- In the case of pupils with disharmony personality structures;
- In cases of conflicts;
- In case of demands from Child Protection, for the offering of social or medical help;
- In the case of psychopedagogical studies demanded by the County Centre of Psychopedagogical Assistance (C.C.P.A.), the Institute of Educational Sciences (I.E.S.) and the County School Inspectorate (C.S.I.)

5. He realizes a specialized intervention for children/pupils with SEN (special educational needs), characterized with emotional disorders, psychosomatic disorders, physical deficiencies, gifted children and he offers psychopedagogical assistance to pupils with special needs.

6. He proposes and organizes programs, projects and activities of information, counselling, school and professional orientation for pupils found in schools in collaboration with education counsellors and other representatives of local community (CEA, NGO-s, associations, economic agents etc.).

7. He ensures counselling services and courses for parents and supports the teachers' methodical activity (educators, primary school teachers, teachers and class masters) and sustains professional development courses for them.

8. He elaborates psycho-social studies regarding the pupils' school options in terminal classes, aiming for professional qualifications through professional and high

school education and the types of schools inserted in the network and other important themes.

9. He elaborates and fills in registration and evidence documents of his school counselling activity.

10. He ensures quality and efficiency for the activity specific for his office.

11. He participates in activities of formation and professional development and intensive promotion of the formation offer of CJRAE/ CJAP.

2. THE SCHOOL COUNSELLOR'S PROBLEMS AND DIFFICULTIES

A fast analysis of the counsellor's activities (12) shows that the twelve months of a year are not to fulfil all his tasks. Each category of activities, from a reality point of view, demands time and he can not always fulfil the quality criteria proposed. The greatest problems is represented by the huge number of pupils "assigned" to one school counsellor (he can treat to 800 pupils). The proof for fulfilling his activities is represented by documents files archived by the school counsellor. The profession of school counsellor is a noble one, but he can rapidly reach a moral and professional wear if he renounces quality in favour of quantity. I consider that all activities proposed are necessary, but each counsellor must have the possibility to work with a small number of pupils and with fewer classes ascribed. The professional activity is not efficiently fulfilled if the time allocated for his personal formation and development is limited. For this reason, programs of professional formation are recommended to be centred on formation needs and to be realized inside the respective school.

Psychopedagogical counselling, similarly to educational counselling, is realized in schools and demands a high formation and preparation of the school counsellor. The problems that appear are frequently from the category of psychological counselling, but when counsellors verify documents regarding the person in counselling, they lose track of the problem content.



"HENRI COANDA"
AIR FORCE ACADEMY
ROMANIA



"GENERAL M.R. STEFANIK"
ARMED FORCES ACADEMY
SLOVAK REPUBLIC

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE of SCIENTIFIC PAPER
AFASES 2013
Brasov, 23-25 May 2013

Filling in documents represents the most time demanding activity, but from the control perspective it is the most important with an affirmative opening towards renouncing bureaucracy in the educational system.

The realization of psycho-sociology studies regarding career orientation supposes the school counsellor's ability in the domain of qualitative and quantitative research and reminds us that a qualitative research in the socio-human domain in Romania is still hard to realize. Even if these studies are realized, there are socio-economic factors that may determine the election of other options by pupils (according to the parents' financial possibilities), and these studies never reach their goal, in universities or high schools near the schools where they were realized. In the same manner, research modules are extremely rare in continuous professional development programs for school counsellors.

The organization for courses for parents and teachers supposes the formation of the school counsellor, he has to have authorization as trainer, mentor and socio-educational animator, but all these suppose years of practice and professional development (consuming time and money).

The activities of psychological counselling demand the school counsellor's professional development in this domain (at least four years in Romania), a course that is paid by the counsellor. It is possible that university masters cover at least the educational curricula and a part of the personal development in a certain form of psychological counselling. Thus, the school counsellor is exposed to a great risk of exhaust and he may bring prejudice to pupils/clients.

The activities developed by students with S.E.N. suppose special psychopedagogy studies or courses in the mentioned domain.

The activities of psychological examination (for 800 pupils) demand licence psychological tests, thus the acquisition of these tests by the school where he works. This is thus another problem, how much money can the school offer for the acquisition of psychological tests with a licence (on different periods of time) from suppliers authorized by the Psychologists College and to insure the counsellor professional development in order to be able to use these tests. If the school doesn't buy these tests then the school counsellor (with psychology studies if he uses these tests) has only the possibility to work with studies gained during his university studies (without a licence).

Child, teenager or young psychopedagogical counselling is realized by the school counsellor in psychopedagogical assistance offices in school, but also in private practice offices recognized by the Romanian Psychologists College, but only if these psychologists are authorized by the Educational Psychology, School Counselling and Vocational Orientation Commission.

Another problem is the absence of laws regarding the statute of school counsellors as psychopedagogical teacher, without the compulsory condition that they are recognized by the Psychologists College. Thus, this is where they arrive if they want to work on their own.

Programs of continuous professional development demanded by school counsellors are authorized by the ministry, in order to gain the necessary number of credits during a certain period of time, and less those authorized by the Psychologists College (which are used only by those who want to work on their own). In other words, the majority of continuous professional development programs authorized by the

ministry of education are free of charge (realized on European funding) and the programs authorized by the College are paid by the school counsellors, thus results reduced motivation for these programs. A reconsideration of the normative frame of this subject is imposed.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS

For an improvement and an efficiency of the school counsellor's activities the rethinking of the work sheets from counselling centres and offices is demanded. The nucleus of the school counsellor's activities is represented by psychopedagogical counselling and pupils' school and vocational orientation, from which all other activities derive.

Initial education received during university studies as psychologist, can not enable the future school counsellor. Thus the rethinking of master programs in educational psychology is also necessary.

The school counsellor's working instruments (especially psychological tests) are hard to acquire from financial reasons. For this reason, the methodology commissions of the Psychologists College and authorized suppliers for the creation of these tests should establish partnership relations with university with master programs in educational psychology. When the psychologists intends to follow a master in education psychology he should also receive a few licence test, and the study fee should also cover these tests.

Psychopedagogical counselling is a part, in most cases, of psychology counselling and my proposal is that professional development programs for school counsellors to approach aspects of psychological counselling and some university master programs to cover the basic education and professional development in psychological counselling. This kind of master programs will be recognized only by the Ministry of education, but also by an authorization received from the Educational Psychology, School Counselling and Vocational Orientation Commission and from the Commission of Clinical Psychology and

Psychotherapy of the Romanian Psychologists College. The connection between universities through education and the enabling of future specialists in educational counselling (in general) and school (with its problems) will become tighter. Most criticism addressed university refers to the fact that the curricular programs offered are not the most appropriate for students to face reality.

Another proposal is to realize a normative frame for the school counsellor's compatibility situation between its statute as teacher and as psychologist authorized by the College. As long as competency recognition from the College is optional, there is no motivation for a participation in professional development programs offered by the College.

County centres of psychopedagogical assistance, in partnership with universities and centres from schools are recommended to organize meetings for professional supervision and a professional intervision. The concept of professional supervision for most school counsellors (especially those without an authorization from the College and which are not obliged by the law to acquire an authorization, because they are considered teachers) has no well established meaning, because, even those found in professional supervision, being recognized by the College, have not benefited from weekly or monthly meetings with their supervisors. A reconsideration of the manner in which the Romanian Psychologists College offers the right to professional supervision to experienced psychologists (which are not bored by their work in education and which take in consideration only the monthly fee) is required.

REFERENCES

- 1.*** Romanian Work Code, www.mmuncii.ro
- 2 *** Order no. 5418/ 8.11.2005 of the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth, www.lege-online.ro