

THE CHILDREN'S PLAY IN THE TRAINING PROCESS

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Abstract

The report deals with the analysis of using different types of children's play in the training process. Play as the source of imitation, model behaviour and abreaction is highly used in interventional programmes focused on reduction of aggressive behaviour and increase of empathetic and pro-social behaviour of children. In this report we evaluate the effects of using different types of children's play in the training process realized by the children of young school age.

Key words: play, socio-psychological training, self-esteem, identity

A play is an important mean through which we develop the social abilities of an individual from early childhood. For the purpose we use different forms of interactive plays and exercises that are an inseparable part of the work with children in intended process of the social upbringing. For the purpose socio-psychological trainings are used at significant degree that are more and more becoming a part of educational process, especially on ethic education lessons. The exercises that are realised by form of active social learning go out of a premise, the better we know our personality including the right orientation in our emotions, behaviour motives, the higher degree we accept ourselves. That means if we are not able of acceptance, there is a high probability of self-delusion increasing, personality instability increasing that has unfavourable consequences on personality formation and her orientation in the social environment as well. The process of personal and social identity formation is made difficult in this way.

According to C. R. Rogers the essential condition of the right personality development is her congruence. The congruence between inner experiencing and outer demonstration of a personality contributes to its higher maturity. The socio-psychological training is one of the forms leading to better self-knowing and self-esteem of a personality as well as to improvement of its social abilities shown in a relationship to people. In a wider sense the socio-psychological training is concentrated on the training of abilities in dealing with people (Kratochvíl, 1978). According to Hermoch (1988) it is a systematic and planned approach to influencing of group processes and group behaviour. Children assert their emotions, feelings in plays. They learn to orientate themselves in the emotions and feelings and at the same time they experiment with their own behaviour and behaviour of others.

The socio-psychological trainings are based, as we mentioned above, on different plays, exercises, activities, case studies and problem situations that are solved and trained at the individual meetings of participants. The application of these techniques as methods used in a socio-psychological training depends on a pre-arranged goal which we study by exercises' realization. Among main general objectives of socio-psychological training can be included:

- deepening of self-knowing;
- improvement in an effective communication;
- training of constructive ways of solving problem and strategies of coping with burden situations;
- whole social abilities improvement;

- acquiring of empathy ability, ability of acceptance and congruence;
- achieving and development of abilities of constructive interpersonal conflicts solving;
- assertive behaviour development;
- moral development and others.

In general, the classic socio-psychological training has the following basic structure (Hamran, 2003):

1. familiarisation of the socio-psychological trainings' participants with their goals;
2. technique application for acquaintance, relax and creation of a pleasant atmosphere in a group;
3. training of new behaviour forms and analysis of experiencing by the training participants;
4. decision making in a group for the most effective and the most suitable behaviour forms and strategies and their application in real environment.

For a successful training continuance, it is necessary to secure that it runs in the environment psychologically safe for the participants. In the training group the main resource of dealing is what is happening "here and now". Conversation content, during the training, concerns most often with what happened in the group.

Basic strategies of acting on person lean on changes in:

- a) abilities, intellect and thinking = cognitive approach
- b) emotions, feelings and experiencing = experiential approach
- c) behaviour = behavioural approach

Zelinova (1997) classifies basic combinations of acting in the socio-psychological trainings into following change strategies:

1. Experiential approach: EMOTIONS – BEHAVIOR – THINKING (at first there is surveyed how children are feeling, what they are experiencing, whether they are frightened, or they are enjoying learning and consecutively they are training how they by themselves e.g. can induce positive experiencing in unpleasant situations)
2. Humanistic approach: EMOTIONS – THINKING – BEHAVIOR (emphasises experiencing, so not only to be able to feel things and phenomena, but also to understand them and the consequence is that such experiencing ends up in behaviour itself)
3. Behavioural approach: BEHAVIOR – EMOTIONS – THINKING (authors focus on strengthening, rewarding of positive reactions, they train demanded behaviour)
4. Learning theories: THINKING – BEHAVIOR – EMOTIONS (first they emphasise thinking, knowledge and it is expected that demanded behaviour will be formed by them – it is a classic model of school education which endeavour also upbringing)
5. Social learning: BEHAVIOR – THINKING – EMOTIONS (the first place takes behaviour, it means social skills training, where cognitive processes and experiences are not ignored, but they try to used it during the change of man)

The strategies and programs mentioned above are long-term applied by the employees of the Department of Educational Psychology FSSaHC UCP in co-operation with the Department of Mass Media Communication and Advertising Studies in Nitra in the work with children and youth, where they use different forms of interventional influences measuring. We introduce examples of chosen researches realised in a group of children, following specific goals, whose individual forms of applied exercises included an individual and a group play.

Development of prosocial behaviour (Šramová, 2002).

The project was focused on the reduction of the aggressive behaviour and the development of prosocial, co-operative, empathic behaviour of children. Exercises in which prevailed play activities, were grouped into three base categories: an individual work, a pair work and a group work. Children who took part in the socio-psychological training (N=21, average age 9.5 yrs.) which consisted of twelve meetings, were labelled by teachers as individuals who often used hostile forms of behaviour. Research measurements after finishing of the socio-psychological training referred to increasing of empathy, co-operation, prosocialness, decreasing of aggressive, hostile elements in children behaviour. There was shown a high effectivity of realised program that respected children's genuine need: curiousness – it means endeavour to know something new, activity – it means active part of an individual in exercises that supported children's joy of learning of something new.

Development of the social competences at children with CAN syndrome (Balcová, Šramová, 2003).

The socio-psychological training was concentrated on the social competence development at children with CAN syndrome who were placed in the crises centre for victims of the domestic violence that lasted for four months. We worked with 32 children and youth, 15 of them formed a group of children and youth with CAN syndrome who participated in the intervenious program and 17 children formed a control group that did not participated in the socio-psychological training. The results of our study proved that the boys with CAN syndrome in comparison with the control group showed a higher degree of aggression before the training beginning, especially in the area of direct aggression. After the intervention aggression degree was lower at boys with CAN syndrome. At the same time boys and girls were less oostery, more sociable after socio-psychological training ending. Increased self-confidence, self-esteem, real image of one's own person were objectively found out at studied children. Compatibility of the prosocial and individualistic personal tendency was proved there. This is related also to ability of preservation of adequate emotional stability by creating of the psychological distance between oneself and other people. This connection is a consequence and assumption of the social competence and accomplishes demand of the effectivity and the adaptiveness.

Program of the creative abilities stimulation at the pre-school children (Fichnová, Szobiová, 2004)

contains exercises supporting group cohesion, personal individuality where a genuine children activity – a play, is highly used. Increasing personality adaptability by the play, that is the supporting the child's creative potential, is an important area of the psychic health formation of a child. Anxiety decreasing, increasing of self-confidence, self-assertion, understanding, improvement of sociability, willingness to co-operation are some of the spheres which are influenced by intended stimulation of children's creativity.

Cognitive training focused on the aggression decrease (Šramová, 2004a).

The program in which 137 children of average age 9,7 years participated was lead by qualified and supervised teachers. Behavioural concept of teacher's support of demanded pupils' behaviour formed central part of the project. Discussions led with pupils, where a teacher strengthened answers containing the prosocial elements and hostile behaviour ignorance, were refilled with the training methods using forms of play activity of children. The training lasting five months was assessed as a highly effective mean of the aggression decrease among children. The final findings showed decrease of the physical, verbal, indirect aggression as well as the negativism, resentment and irritability. All studied fields, except of resentment, showed statistically significant decrease after the ending of cognitive training in the group of studied children in comparison with the control group who did not pass the

training (N-125 children, average age 9,6 years). The important finding is that aggressive behaviour of pupils decreased after teachers' intervention.

For the purpose that a play, as an important mean of personality formation of an individual, is not being vanished from education-upbringing process, it is important to teach the future teachers to integrate the play interactive activities into education. In the framework of the humanisation of a school system, the socio-psychological training turns out to be one of the effective ways that enable pupils and teachers to get to know, develop and use, in appropriate way, social skills necessary for everyday coping with problem situations. The future teachers achieve in this way assumptions for successful management of their profession not only from the viewpoint of scientific readiness in the subject but also in a field of interpersonal relationships and usage of psychological means at working with pupils, teachers and parents. Several specialists point out that during teachers' education there is a need to pay attention to the formation of the more effective upbringing and educational strategies, programs and trainings focused, besides others, on social abilities development. With lowering the tension, creating of positive social atmosphere at school, sincere and open communication and forming of the partnership between a teacher and pupils we can, in sense of humanisation, counteract negative behaviour and create in this way conditions for healthy psycho-social development of pupils.

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