

The options of social-psychological training application in the pre-gradual preparation of teachers and educators

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The contribution deals with the possibility of applying the intervening program (concretely social-psychological training) in the educational conditions. We present some results from long-term research connected with the influence of social-psychological training on the group atmosphere.

Key words: social-psychological training, training group, group atmosphere, community, and community experience

Introduction

Present pedagogical field is unceasingly searching for the ways of improving human upbringing and education with the goal for the best preparation for changes in today's society. Attention is more and more concentrating on social relations between participants of educational processes. They are the bases for the build up of group atmosphere, which quality has the deep-going consequences for the effect in observing the group goals.

Kollarik makes out the group atmosphere as an inner feature of every group, which amplifies wider social sides – from social atmosphere in the group reflecting the level and quality of inside group life, through the relation to work and interactive emotional and social relationships, the degree of social acceptance and the part of individuals in the group relation, till to dimensions that primary define the character and quality of social atmosphere.

One of the possibilities for the teacher and educator's preparation to proper influence in the classroom and to form it as an effective group able to achieve the defined goals; is when they have their own experience with the forms of group work as the social-psychological training (SPT).

With the students of UKF in Nitra – we realized SPT in the means of preparation for the future profession. SPT was based on personal experience, but at the same time it was connected with the relevant theoretical knowledge coming out from the active social teaching theories with the classic position of training supervisor. He prepares structures and adopts individual activities to participants in the process of his training. His main goal was to encourage the social competence of future teachers in the way of developing the optimal forms in interpersonal behavior.

The experiencing of participants competence to the group and the intensity of feedback we can identify with the psychological community experience, if we see the training group as a community. Heller (according to Halamova, 2002) differentiates two main meanings of the term "community":

- Spatial community – it is defined as the place and it is connected to some specific territory, geographical image of community

- Concerning community – it has a relative meaning and it concerns the quality of individual personal relations without considering the locality

At this time as the consequence of changes in the society related to globalization, the important position is getting the communities, which are grouped together by interests and relations. Shaffer and Anundsen (according to Halamová, 2002) define the relational community as “the group of people who share common experiences, depend on each other, make decisions together, identify themselves as a part of something bigger as a summary of individual relations that are pledge to function for their own, other and also group development and contentment. In this sense we can see the training group as a community.

In our contribution, we concentrate on the group atmosphere analyses and the community experience in the social-psychological training.

The goal and hypotheses of research

Our goal was to find out how the SPT influences the group atmosphere and community experience.

We assumed that the influence of SPT would be shown by growing group atmosphere in the positive way and by increased rate of community experience after absolving it and with comparing before the SPT.

Method

For the group atmosphere measuring we used the group atmosphere Scale (Kollarik et al, 1992). The Scale was based on the principle of semantic differential and it is possible to use it anywhere, where group goals are defined and for which the social atmosphere needs to be positive (in sports, schools, training courses). After repeated administration, it is possible to measure with the Scale also the degree of improving after applying certain changes.

The participants are asked to describe the atmosphere in their group in the series of ten bipolar adjectives scaled by eight grades. The result makes the summary of marked scale values, which we can change into percentiles. In the raw score the degree of group atmosphere gets the rates from 10 to 80, if the values is higher – better expresses the group atmosphere.

We were measuring the community experience by the Scale of perceiving the community experience. The authors are Bishop, Chertok and Jason (it was translated into Slovak by Halamová, 2001). The Scale score was expressed by living the participants’ competence to their group and by the feedback intensity. The arranged scale version has 30 items regarded on five-degree scale of Likert type, divided by factor analysis on three factors:

- Mission – estimates the extent to which the respondent can see that he is actively involved in the group with other members for achieving the same goal (12 items)

- Reciprocal responsibility – related to perceiving own group as one, in which all the members are accepted and all together are responsible to each other (12 items)
- Disharmony – represents the level of dissatisfaction with different aspects of community experience

We get the whole scale score after counting all the items.

We used for the statistic analyses Student's t-test for Corel set.

Research sample

Research sample composed 17 university students of 4th grade studying to become the future teachers in the UKF in Nitra (7 men and 10 women) whose age average was 22,3 years.

Process of research

We were realizing SPT in the group for 80 hours during two semesters, from September 2002 to May 2003 for four hours per week.

The measuring of community atmosphere and experience community in the training group was accomplished before SPT and right after the end.

Results

Tab.1 the results of measuring the group atmosphere and community experience in training group

	1. measuring		2. measuring		t-test	Significance
	AM	SD	AM	SD		
A	5.82	1.07	6.89	0.70	4.01	0.001
B	5.70	1.21	6.29	0.92	1.71	0.106
C	5.47	1.46	6.41	1.06	1.99	0.064
D	5.00	1.00	6.65	0.93	5.56	0.000
E	5.70	1.49	6.65	1.11	3.39	0.004
F	4.82	1.15	5.94	1.20	3.27	0.005
G	5.12	1.62	6.65	1.06	4.19	0.001
H	5.53	1.23	7.18	0.95	4.41	0.000
I	5.06	1.43	6.70	0.92	4.30	0.001
J	5.76	1.35	7.06	0.97	3.80	0.002
SA	54.00	10.90	66.41	8.04	4.50	0.000
K	35.23	7.65	41.47	8.28	4.18	0.001
L	34.88	9.74	42.24	7.75	3.85	0.001
M	15.59	3.41	15.59	4.66	0.00	1.000
CS	85.70	16.49	99.29	4.12	4.08	0.001

Legend: AM–arithmetic mean, SD–standard deviation, SA–general group atmosphere, A–J=items, (A–friendly, B–accepting, C–satisfied, D–enthusiastic, E–productive, F–sincere relations, G–cooperative, H–interesting, I–supporting, J–successful), K–M=Scale factors of perceiving community experience (K–mission, L–mutual responsibility, M–disharmony), CS– cumulative score of perceiving community experience scale

We noticed in the “group atmosphere Scale” comparing before the training and after finishing it, statistically important difference, in the way of more intensive processes of group atmosphere to friendlier and more productive atmosphere in the training work process. The work in the group with cooperative and supporting atmosphere led to bigger success, better self-opening, more honest relationships and more constructive work for developing self-identity at participants.

We can observe from the results of “perceiving community experience Scale” that SPT improved and got higher the general psychological community experience, higher the active group member involvement for achieving the same group goals, better perceiving own group and the responsibility of group members to each other.

Epilogue

According to Kollárik (1992) the general group atmosphere figures not only in the role of factor conditioning the group success, but also in the role of its development and level coefficient, in which can be the place for active functioning on individual and its compensating with different actual influence factors.

Following the mentioned results and also some more results, which we published in previous contributions (Hamranová 2002a, 2002b, 2003, Hamranová, Zaťková, 2003) and from researchers' results for looking over the training group effect (e.g. Šrámová 2001, 2002, 2003, Zaťková 2003, Lajčiaková 2002, Fichnová 2001) we can deduce conclusion that social-psychological training is adequate component for future teachers preparation because of the better group atmosphere and improving psychological community experience by which influences the general character of life in the group, mutual emotional and social relations, the rate of social acceptance, involvement and integration of individuals into the group, and by these influences the group effectiveness in the meaning of goal achieving.

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