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Pedagogical Counseling as a Professional Activity of Specialists in the Field of Education

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Abstract

The article reveals the essence of pedagogical counselling as a sphere of professional activity of specialists in the field of education. Specific features of pedagogical counselling that distinguish it from other types of counselling are defined and characterized. The main directions of professional activity of educational consultants are considered. Requirements for professional counselors in the field of education are outlined.

Keywords: pedagogical counseling, education, guidance

Reforms of the domestic system of education and implementation of innovative technologies and teaching aids have caused the population's demand for qualified education consulting services. Due to this, the modern direction of professional activity of specialists began to form in Ukraine, which can be defined as pedagogical counselling.

In recent years, counselling has been given attention by many sciences: psychology, sociology, management, pedagogy, etc. Each of them has its purpose, object and subject of research. For us, the object of scientific research is pedagogical counselling. Aleshnikova (2000), Bezkravny (2009), Zaychenko, Pevzner, Slastenin and Kolesnikova (2006) made significant scientific contributions to the development of certain aspects of pedagogical counselling as a professional activity. However, disclosure of the essence of pedagogical counselling as a professional activity of specialists has not yet been the subject of a separate study.

The purpose of the article is to determine the essence and specific features of pedagogical counselling as a professional activity of specialists in the field of education.

Nowadays, counselling (from the Latin counselling) on education can be provided by specially trained professionals (professional counsellors) or by a person who has experience in solving a particular situation or problem related to education or training. Therefore, it should be noted that counselling should be considered as professional and non-professional activities. In our case, we will pay attention to pedagogical counselling as a professional activity of specialists in the field of education.

The concept of counselling should be considered from two sides: on the one hand, it is the process of providing a client with advisory services and, on the other hand, the sphere of professional activity of certain specialists (medical consultation, legal counselling, educational counselling, child consultation, etc.). If you consider counselling as a process of consulting a specialist, then this is an organized interaction between a consultant and a client aimed at the positive solution of his problem. The counselling process involves the following consecutive steps: studying the client's problem, clearly defining it, developing alternatives to solving a problem, helping the client to choose a solution to the problem, facilitating the implementation of the decision, evaluating, and receiving feedback from the client on the effectiveness of the problem solving. The educational counselling process involves a certain sequence of actions performed by a professional counsellor to achieve positive changes within institutions and educational establishments, the rapid resolution of problems, or the creation of conditions in which consumers of counselling educational services will be able to do so on their own. Compliance with the sequence of stages of the counselling process in education is an important condition for the consultant's professionalism. In the process of counselling, a professional counsellor in the field of education uses a certain toolkit – a set of modes and methods for working with information and clients that help identify and solve a customer's problem.

If considering pedagogical counselling as a professional activity, it is the activity of specialists in the field of education, which is aimed at satisfying the needs of institutions and educational establishments and pedagogical staff in professional counselling and development services. Professional counselling in the field of education involves providing counselling services to individuals as well as education, training, choice of profession, etc.

Educational counselling services can be provided by professionally trained specialists working in institutions and educational establishments and consulting organizations. Among such organizations we include: pedagogical universities and colleges, institutes of postgraduate pedagogical education, school methodical offices, district (city) methodical offices, centres of teaching and methodical work, centres of pedagogical counselling, psychological, medical and pedagogical consultations, educational consulting centres, public educational organizations, etc. Pedagogical counselling in the mentioned organizations is carried out

by specialists of pedagogical direction: teachers of institutions of higher education as scientific directors and consultants, methodologists, educational consultants, supervisors, coaches, advisers, tutors, moderators, independent experts in the field of education.

Knowledge, skills, abilities and personal qualities of consultants in the field of education determine the specifics of their professional activities and allow them to solve customer problems on a professional level. In professional counselling, professional counsellors have to adhere to the following basic principles:

- the principle of voluntariness, which stipulates that the client himself determines the need to apply for a professional counsellor, chooses the form and duration of counselling;

- the principle of equality defines the same responsibility of the client and the consultant for the success of the counselling process. The task of the consultant is to create conditions that will stimulate the client to make an independent decision, and the client's task is to effectively interact with the consultant in the process of counselling;

- the principle of variability implies that counselling is situational changing and severely limits the ability to distinguish between universal ways of solving various client problems. The practice of counselling can not be reduced to the development of ready-made solutions for any client problems. It stimulates counsellors to self-analysis and continuous reflexive activity, since there can not be the same clients, the same pedagogical problems and situations, and therefore, the same consulting services;

- the integrity principle reflects the system of consulting services in the continuous support of clients. It is logical interconnectivity and consistency in the provision of a range of counselling services that can ensure the effectiveness of counselling;

- the principle of professional ethics determines compliance with the ethical standards of a professional consultant, which excludes client manipulation, self-advising consultant, imposing subjective professional positions and assessments;

- the principle of independence of the consultant comes from the fact that in the process of counselling the specialist must abstract from other social roles that he performs in a society;

- the principle of confidentiality implies the inadmissibility of disclosure of information obtained by a consultant in the process of consulting a client;

- the principle of cooperation indicates that the consultant, in cooperation with the client, must adequately assess his or her own capabilities and, if necessary, consult a more experienced counsellor or consultancy advisor, which may include specialists from different profiles who can help resolve the client's problem (Zaichenko, Pevzner, Slastenin, Kolesnikova, 2006, p. 15–17).

An advisory service provided by professional consultants in the field of education is a special informational product of the manufacturing activity of a consulting organization that is provided to the client in the form of developed programs, projects, recommendations, advice, etc. It is an intellectual product created by a consulting organization that remains in the possession of the client after the completion of counselling.

Educational counselling services have their own specific features that distinguish them from others. Firstly, the consulting service can be considered as the non-material good that the consumer receives for the development of the educational and cultural outlook, and material – if the consultant provides the client with recommendations in paper, electronic or other media.

Secondly, the provision of specialist counselling services in the field of education reflects the simultaneous process of their production and consumption, as it is carried out through close cooperation between the consultant and the client. However, the quality of consulting services can only be evaluated by the client after its execution.

Thirdly, educational advisory services are a commodity, since they are the subject of sale, that is, they have consumer value and cost. Educational counselling service is a product expressed in the form of special information that is produced and sold by an advisory organization and purchased by a client.

Fourth, identical education advisory services provided by different consulting organizations may differ in form, methodology, content, and implementation technology.

The quality of the educational counselling service and the effectiveness of counselling depend on the client's personal involvement and the professionalism of the counsellor. The main features of the quality of consulting services are:

- reliability of information – the quality of information, which determines the degree of objective, accurate reflection of social reality;
- modernity of information – information should be based on new statistical data, the theory and methodology of pedagogical science;
- completeness of information – means that it is enough for the client to understand the situation and make a decision;
- brief information – a concise and clear presentation of information by the consultant, which allows the client to make a decision quickly;
- usefulness of information – the practical value and importance of information for the client to solve the problem;
- clarity of information – unambiguous interpretation and awareness of information by the client;
- a variety of methods for evaluating information – the same information should be evaluated by different methods, depending on the scope of its application.

Professional counsellors in the field of education provide counselling in the following areas:

- counselling of the child (on the subject of study, meta-subject consultation, professional counselling, pre-professional consultation, social-pedagogical counselling, educational counselling);
- family counselling (didactic counselling, medical-psychological counselling, corrective counselling, information services, consultation on cooperation and interaction);
- counselling of teachers (audit of quality of educational process, methodical consultation, project counselling, procedural and diagnostic counselling, general pedagogical counselling);
- counselling of management personnel (provision of information technologies, program-targeted, command-group, value-oriented, psychological, marketing consulting, provision of public relations, organizational-methodical maintenance, audit of school development) (Zaichenko et al., 2006).

The effectiveness of the professional consultant depends on his theoretical readiness, qualifications, personality traits and customer expectations. A professional consultant in the field of education can not give the consumer a ready-made solution. His task is to help the client to identify the essence of the problem and overcome it. Consumers in the process of counselling must understand the nature of the problem and find solutions to solve it. For this purpose, a professional consultant must possess a variety of methods and techniques of consulting with the client.

Methods in pedagogical counselling, on the one hand, are a mean and a way of knowledge and application of the knowledge created by mankind and pedagogical practice, and on the other, it is the concrete actions of the consultant and the client that contribute to the qualitative professional change of the subject or object. The most used methods in pedagogical counselling are: visual psychodiagnostics, pedagogical and sociology. At the same time, a professional counsellor in the field of education must have the skills of professional impact on the client and conducting an advisory interview. The professional use of methods and techniques of counselling ensures the effectiveness of the counsellor's interaction with the client and the effectiveness of the counselling process.

An important part of the professional activity of a consultant in the field of education is the observance of professional requirements:

- Creation of client consultation process based on interaction and trust;
- Revealing the attention and respect for the client's personality in the process of counselling;
- Creating a favourable psychological climate for counselling;
- Perception of the problem or difficulties of the client and providing him with real help in solving it;

– Continuous improvement of professional skills in pedagogical counselling.

So, after considering the essence of the concepts of “counselling”, “counselling process”, “counselling”, we defined the concept of “pedagogical counselling” as a sphere of professional activity of specialists in the field of education. It differs from other types of professional counselling by the purpose, content, object, subjects, methods, means and results of counselling.

For pedagogical counselling, there are specific features: professional counselling services can be provided by professionally trained specialists working in institutions and educational establishments and consulting organizations; An advisory service provided by a client advisor is an intellectual product created by a consulting organization that remains in the possession of the client after the completion of counselling; the quality of counselling educational services and the effectiveness of counselling depend on the personal involvement of the client and the professionalism of the counsellor; the main areas of professional activity of counsellors in the field of education are counselling the child, the family, management staff and citizens as individuals; the effectiveness of the professional consultant depends on his theoretical training, qualifications, personality traits and customer expectations.

The growth of mobility among young people and the emergence of new types and areas of economic activity in the field of education have led to an increasing demand for counselling education services and the development of pedagogical counselling in Ukraine.

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