

Beata Adamczyk, Jolanta E. Kowalska  
(University of Łódź)

## **Confrontational pedagogy as a proposition of new approach to work with socially maladjusted teenagers in educational centres German experiences**

### **1. Introduction**

Confrontational pedagogy as a notion and *modus operandi* is still not widely known in Poland. Its elements, however, may be traced in the field of social pedagogy, reclamation, socio-therapy, psychology or psychotherapy. The term was borrowed from the US and grafted on the German soil where until today it has been worked upon. It stemmed from the social work and pedagogy (especially social pedagogy), taking from confrontational methodology activities of social workers and educators (*die konfrontative Methodik*). Also the influence of cognitive psychology and Corsini's therapy oriented on confrontation, and Farellys' provocative therapy can be seen.

In the opinion of Jens Weidner, confrontational pedagogy is not an alternative but a complementing element in understanding another person, as is the case with humanistic pedagogy. It is seen as the last resource in the work of an educator with youth who present aggressive and violent behaviour. It occurs when we are faced with mobbing, vandalism, withdrawal, insulting in the young people on school premises or other facilities supporting children and teenagers. If teachers and educators allow the smallest signs of aggressive behaviour, they must be aware of the fact that victims will appear. And in professional work, it is considered a huge mistake.<sup>1</sup>

Confrontational pedagogy has both followers and opponents in Germany. It was not adopted with enthusiasm. Initially, according to

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<sup>1</sup> J. Weidner, "Konfrontative Pädagogik. Plädoyer für eine gerade Linie mit Herz - auch im schulischen Alltag", in: U. Koch-Laugwitz (ed.), *Konfrontative Pädagogik - neue Handlungsstrategien im Umgang mit Kindern und Jugendlichen als Täter und Opfer in einer erziehenden Schule*, Berlin: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2005, p. 3.

Wolfgang Tischner, in many German educators it provoked a defensive reaction because it massively lowered their position.<sup>2</sup> Accusations appeared that under new nomenclature authoritarian structures are hidden. The followers, however, claim that not every type of behaviour or activity should be associated with wrong assumptions because the aim of a confrontation is to build up relationships with a student:

The requirement of every confrontation is to allow interference in the case of every interested party. It means that on the basis of relationship deriving from liking and respect, it is important that the repetitive and not approved behaviour is criticised - both by peers and the educator. The aim is to change the attitude and behaviour in the interested party.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. On aggressive behaviour prevention – suggested solutions in Germany

Development of confrontational pedagogy resulted in implementing many preventive activities throughout the country. Recently, there have been a number of projects elaborated and implemented in Germany, which include aggressive behaviour prevention as well as social maladjustment. One of the projects that is worth looking into is *stark.starker.WIR.* project that was realised in 2011/2012 by 39 schools on various levels of education (including primary schools, junior high schools, the so-called real school, vocational schools) throughout the country, particularly in Baden and Witemberg lands. The realised activities broadened the notion of prevention and gave rise to create the “pillars” of preventive school curriculum.<sup>4</sup>

German experts on education claim that for school prevention to be effective, it must be - according to the proposition of Dan Olweus - always anchored in three social levels, i.e. on the class, school and individual level. It aims at maintaining health in every person (behavioural prevention) and also at creating environment that favours creating relationships and interpersonal relations (prevention of interpersonal relations). It includes partners from outside the school environment and is one of the elements of development of school quality.

<sup>2</sup> W. Tischner, *Konfrontative Pädagogik – die vergessene “vaeterliche” Seite der Erziehung*, 2004, [http://www.antigewalt.com/c\\_fachartikel\\_tischner.pdf](http://www.antigewalt.com/c_fachartikel_tischner.pdf) [accessed: 17.01.2015].

<sup>3</sup> J. Weidner, “Konfrontative Pädagogik...”, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Eine Handreichung für Schulen*, collective work within the project: *stark.starker.WIR.*, Wurttemberg-Stuttgart: Ministerium für Kultus, Jugend und Sport, 2012, pp. 9-47.

This multi-stage and individual for each school process is time consuming. Thanks to the experiences of schools that realised that project, knowledge on how to work in order to create and implement a comprehensive preventive programme at school was gained and that the time needed to elaborate it is between 5 and 10 years.<sup>5</sup>

Aims of the project:

- school is a place where dignity and health of every person are respected;
- school is a place where both students and teachers feel safe;
- Skills needed to solve conflicts between students and teachers are enhanced
- students are provided with good conditions that allow them to develop and deal with problems in life;
- students' personality and the sense of self-efficiency are enhanced;
- long-term, directed and systematic activities are undertaken at school, which are of preventive character.<sup>6</sup>

The idea of stark.starker.WIR. project presents various activities in the area of prevention at schools in a rather broad context. The already existing programmes and strategies have been appreciated, attention was drawn to the activities undertaken earlier and - if appropriate - they were complemented with activities "anchored" in the preventive programme adjusted to the characteristic of an individual school, by complementing the already existing curriculum in the field of social skills (*Sozialcurriculum*). External motive for creating and implementing stark.starker.WIR. project were the tragic events in Winnended and Wendlingen in 2009 and the decisions made by the authorities concerning implementing programmes for children and teenagers in the field of preventing aggression at schools.

## 2.1. Preventive activities at schools

For a long time activities of preventive character were directed mainly to schools where there were allegedly the greatest threats for students, i.e. addictions and aggression. Initially, campaigns were released that were supposed to scare off (concerning drug addiction) which - as it was later discovered - were of little success. Therefore, a system was elaborated that was based on raising awareness,

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<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem.

lecturing and developing life skills, and offering specific help, including applying punitive measures so as to protect third parties in case of acts of violence (intervention). Numerous primary prevention programmes were created that were adjusted to different fields of problems. The increase in the number of civilisation diseases appearing in childhood, adolescence and in early adult life directed the attention of experts towards the subject of preventing illnesses. Therefore, activities fostering physical activities at school and outside it were included in the curriculum, as well as information on healthy eating.<sup>7</sup>

## 2.2. From prevention to health promotion

Stark.starker.WIR. project does not only concentrate solely on addiction prevention but on behavioural prevention directed at all students and not just those who take drugs or present aggressive behaviour. Thanks to such approach, protective aspects are enhanced, e.g. through programmes that shape life skills, which include practising resistance to group pressure and the ability to say “no” in dangerous situations. As part of the project, the students also gain knowledge on psychoactive substances and the consequences of using them.<sup>8</sup>

Preventing aggression very generally outlines the projects and activities that should help people in avoiding arguments that include aggression, and in learning to solve conflicts constructively. The main principle of aggressive behaviour prevention at school is a thesis: “There is no room for aggression at school. School must be a safe place where everyone lives with no fear and where we can learn and work.”<sup>9</sup>

Activities from the field of school prevention concentrate currently on preventing problematic behaviour or eliminating risk. Whereas in health prevention attention is focused on enhancing resources, it is called increasing resistance (*Resilienzforderung*). It is based on such approach that tests which skills and features maintain people in good health. Strategies from these two areas are combined within the field of life skills. These activities help children and teenagers become conscious and responsible people, they also help them develop as independent and strong personalities. Such a model was elaborated in the discussed project.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibidem, p. 10.

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem.

### 2.3. Support for schools

Stark.starker.WIR. project offers personal support and tools to plan adaptation, implement, realise and evaluate preventive concepts adjusted to the school's specificity. Below, there are conclusions elaborated within the project:

Goals for future preventive projects at schools:

- long-term and systematic concepts of prevention referring to stages of a child's development must be created;
- programmes oriented on multi-level needs must be created;
- directed co-operation of various institutions, e.g. public health, education and social institutions must be created so as to join the resources.<sup>11</sup>

Teachers and educators also have access to a number of publications on the subject of prevention, to course books, tools and scientific works. Currently, there are so many of them that even experts may become lost in their abundance. *The leading idea of prevention. Models of developing social competences and prevention of aggressive behaviour and addiction*<sup>12</sup> is a publication worth noting as it presents 40 models of preventing aggression and addiction. In 2012 this publication was updated and currently, next to the already tried and tested programmes in the field of prevention of addiction and social maladjustment, there are modules that support pro-health behaviour and promoting life skills.

The activities described above show how some selected assumptions of confrontational pedagogy can be realised in practice and to what extent the changes are possible when it comes to school reality.

### 3. Confrontational pedagogy as pedagogy with "fatherly face"

In German sector of education, it has been observed since the 1990s that boys - as opposed to girls - achieve much worse results in learning. Unfortunately, there is a growing tendency in this phenomenon. It can be seen from the studies that, only in the number of graduates, the ratio of boys dropped in the last thirty years from 60 to 40%. Moreover, the grades achieved by boys in the final exams are on average, by almost one point worse than their female friends. The number of

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem, p. 47.

<sup>12</sup> Original title of this publication: *Roter Faden Prävention - Modelle zur Förderung sozialer Kompetenzen und zur Gewalt- und Suchtprävention*, 2009.

boys at special school increased in the last 30 years from 60 to 64%, whereas the number of high school graduates who did not pass their A-levels even from 55 to 65%.<sup>13</sup>

Many experts (critics of education) considers the fact that school, under the rule of feminist movements in pedagogy and education, and because of the attempts to overcome the alleged discrimination against girls, became "boy-unfriendly environment." Thus behaviour of girls at school was acknowledged as most expected and even raised to the level of school behaviour, whereas boys were measured according to the accepted scale. The natural need to move (activity) in boys is hastily treated as lack of discipline and the usually not serious fights between them are evaluated as threatening and pathological. Discussions on this matter take place not only in the circle of social sciences, but also on public forum. If anyone in the playground, school yard or class appears in the traditional role of a boy, he is perceived by the teachers and educators as aggressive and socially maladjusted. Not surprisingly, boys account for two-thirds of patients treated psychiatrically and at educational clinics.<sup>14</sup>

Additionally, typical behaviour in the roles of individual genders is encouraged because education and upbringing concerning personality are more and more dominated by women. It is particularly visible in kindergartens, special school, junior high schools and high schools. Among all types of school, women domination is particularly visible in primary schools where they account for 84.7% at the moment. The effects of this phenomenon where there is a shortage of male teachers in kindergartens and primary schools – caused by the change in the functioning of families, are constantly increasing. More and more boys are raised with no father. Currently, every sixth family in Germany it is the mother who is a single parent. The ratio of children who grow up without a father is disproportionally high among the future students who later fail at school, people who drop out of universities, drug users, rapists and prisoners. The growing "feminisation of education" in Germany can be seen not only in the quantity, but is also reflected in the thoroughly changing educational approach. Predominance of the "motherly side" in upbringing is expressed especially in the fact that it refers to the elements of confrontation in education with huge distance, sometimes it is even referred to as "hugging pedagogy" (*Kuszelnpaedagogik*). Instead of practising prevention of conflicts and maintaining emotionally warm, genuine and empathic relations,

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<sup>13</sup> W. Tischner, *Konfrontative Pedagogik – die vergessene "vaeterliche" Seite...*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*.

only very few educators (disregarding any potential criticism) accepts the accusations that they are “authoritarian”, at the same time stressing their compliance with the norms and evaluation based on results. Many of them, however, enjoy being magnanimous, non-repressive and understanding, thus resigning from law and order so as not to lose “good contact with” youth.<sup>15</sup>

The thesis concerning removing the fatherly side of upbringing is not a new one. H. Nohl<sup>16</sup> wrote about this educational movement as early as 1933. In his opinion, social relations (concerning upbringing in a family) will change (reverse) in the years to come. Where there used to be a father and his discipline, duties and efficiency, there is now too one-sided maternal role. In the whole historical change concerning the dominance of one side (be it paternal or maternal), educators played a significant part by attempting to bring balance.

It is obvious that the role of education should not be one-sided when being just “soft – submissive” or “consequent – constant”, subjective or just objective and showing only supportive understanding or applying confrontation and limitations in contacts with children and teens. For personal development, both a child and youth, need both sides of education: maternal and paternal. Therefore, it is strengthening of the “fatherly” side that is searched for in confrontational pedagogy.<sup>17</sup>

### **3.1. Main assumptions of confrontational pedagogy**

The phenomenon of violence among youth is openly talked about not only in Germany, but also in Poland and other European countries. Each country created their own strategy concerning early and planned actions to be undertaken against aggression, and yet this phenomenon grows instead of diminishing. Young people presenting aggressive behaviour can disorganise even the best planned educational or social activities. Based on what confrontational pedagogy suggests, actions are undertaken that are aimed at fostering social competences, particularly those connected with showing emotions, solving conflicts and overcoming difficulties. Thanks to them, problems in shaping career paths may be avoided. Strategies applied according to the assumptions of confrontational pedagogy are based on a specified course of action in contacts with many socially maladjusted students. They can also be realised by teachers themselves as well as educators, both at

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<sup>15</sup> Ibidem, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem, p. 5.

schools, educational or socio-therapeutic facilities and other facilities supporting children and youth. These strategies are not directed at looking for solutions and aid outside the facility but they are based on independent activities of teachers, educators or school psychologists.

The basic assumption of confrontational pedagogy is specifying borders and rules. These borders are usually outlined by the young people themselves. Crossing them is consequently penalised. Rules set together must be followed by everyone, teachers and students alike. The principal rule is the right to free and friendly environment and working and learning conditions. This right is inalienable.

Outlining borders is necessary when working with children and youth who present aggressive behaviour. It is one of the most important and most demanding processes of education.

There are three main areas where interference is necessary, even against a child's will:

- 1) borders must be set when a child is clearly in danger (aggression), especially in threatening situations at school or any other supportive facility;
- 2) borders are necessary when – in case of their absence – people may be insulted or tortured;
- 3) it is necessary to set borders when they concern social life and habits.

Undertaking an intervention in cases of violating the borders is a great challenge for many teachers and educators. It takes such skills as: being able to solve conflicts (especially unrelenting ones), mediation and negotiation, the skills of realistic evaluation of a situation and appropriate reaction to them, particularly in contacts with difficult students. An educator does not always know how to react when borders are violated. Redl, a psychoanalyst, suggests almost twenty possibilities of intervention in "children who hate", beginning with a subtle one – non-verbal hint, through a warning and to punishment in various forms, e.g. fixing the damage or compensation.<sup>18</sup>

Confrontational pedagogy describes a professional sense of understanding in contacts with a socially maladjusted individual: a professional personality should show 80% of empathy, understanding and forbearance and 20% of acerbity, conflictuality and the ability to set out borders. It also distances itself from authoritarian-paternal manner of upbringing as well as from the type that only accepts support and lenient understanding which are the reasons – in social dimension – of perverted behaviour, labelling processes and releasing the malad-

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<sup>18</sup> J. Weidner, "Konfrontative Pädagogik...", p. 5-7.

justed from any responsibility. Confrontational pedagogy goes towards “authoritarian style of upbringing”, which mostly means: warmth, care and love, clearly stated structures and borders, pro-developing activities and requirements. The advantages of this style, as opposed to the authoritarian and permissive understanding, are pro-social behaviour in children and youth socially maladjusted, greater openness and social competences, including assertiveness in everyday behaviour of the young people, because this style of upbringing requires constant communication between the visions of educators and students. Especially the later aspect is important in relation to the aggressive and socially maladjusted teenagers who would like to define themselves according to the reclamation process as people who have everything their way, imposing their opinion on others. Authoritarian approach makes it difficult to manage conflicts in social space. Pedagogical motto is: to understand different behaviour (socially not accepted) but not to be lenient. It stands in line with the tradition of tried and tested programmes concerning mediation and solving conflicts.<sup>19</sup>

Contact with a child presenting aggressive behaviour at school is placed in the centre of confrontational pedagogy attention. Currently, among teachers, educators and social workers in Germany, there is a high demand for further training in the field of confrontational pedagogy. Of particular interest are methods of dealing with “difficult and aggressive individuals, unwilling to co-operate” in pedagogical work. Especially in the context of socio - pedagogical work with socially maladjusted and presenting aggressive behaviour, the concept of confrontational pedagogy seems to be working as a valuable complementation of classical pedagogical work.

The notion “confrontational pedagogy” does not describe a closed theory but a style of behaviour in which confrontation is used as one of many forms of intervention. The most well-known methods in this field is a training of anti-aggressive behaviour (*Anti-Aggressivitaetstraining* - AAT) and “coolness training” (*Coolness Training* - CT).<sup>20</sup>

Trainings are all about recognition - in case of a specific deficit or activity - of what drove the culprits who frequently use aggression. It lasts for six months (one meeting a week lasting for several hours) and the meetings take place in a few groups. AAT training is used primarily in judiciary, whereas CT training was well adapted in the field of supporting youth and education. These are specialised forms of trainings

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<sup>19</sup> Ibidem, p. 7.

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.ifkh.de/konfrontative-handlungslehre/konfrontative-gesprachsfuehrung-in-der-jugendhilfe> [accessed: 9.02.2015].

in social skills. Both are oriented around the paradigm of cognitive theory and learning, and are theoretically assigned to the concept of confrontational pedagogy. During trainings and workshops various techniques are used, e.g. simulation games, "hot chair" technique, instructional films, discussions, creating statements - feedback. Currently, the names AAT and CT are copyright protected, thus their realisation maintains on a high level. Coach licence may be obtained after a 15-month course organised by an Institute of Social Work and Social Pedagogy in Frankfurt am Main and the German Institute of Confrontational Pedagogy in Hamburg.<sup>21</sup>

Realising AAT and CT trainings in practice is characterised by the following properties:

- AAT training is based on tertiary practice, in cases of imprisonment. Motivation to participate in it is secondary as the socially mal-adjusted undertakes therapy not voluntarily, which is accepted. During the first four weeks of participation in the training, a change in motivation should take place and transfer the motivation in the individual into the primary one;

- CT training appears in secondary practice and is performed at school in the field of "street work", aid facilities for youth as long as they participate voluntarily;

- the target group are people who fight too frequently and treat violence as fun. They must, however, be able to realise the programme both in cognitive and linguistically;

- team leading the group are composed of two graduates of humanistic studies with a certificate of additional trainings in the field of AAT/CT and with great awareness of how to use the "hot chair" technique;

- preliminary stage of the training is working on motivation including both talks with perpetrators and confrontational talks carried out in an interesting way. Time of realisation of this stage is about 60 hours in a group of five participants;

- content of the training includes: individual interviews, analysis of tendency to be aggressive, letters, essays and films of aggression victims that allow to "feel" the victim's suffering, letters distancing from the group that glorifies violence;

- with sequences closing confrontational meetings, it is important to pay attention to fix the elements of relaxation and reflection as it is an indispensable element;

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<sup>21</sup> J. Weidner, "Konfrontative Pädagogik...", p. 10.

– AAT and CT trainings show the optimistic image of man. Perpetrators can reject their tendency to be aggressive.<sup>22</sup>

It is worth emphasising here that for the needs of school education was designed in 2002 a confrontation-social training (*Konfrontative Soziale Training* – KST), in which the “hot chair” technique is not used, but participants refer critically and reflexively to their breaking the norm or inappropriate behaviour. The aim of this training is to rebuild their moral awareness so that students behave better and teachers could conduct lessons without obstacles.<sup>23</sup>

Confrontational pedagogy may be used in institutions and non-governmental organisations that undertake activities in the field of broadly understood aggressive behaviour prevention, and which are directed at children and youth who present educational difficulties, but also at adult abusers. The suggested solutions may primarily be used by schools and other educational facilities. It needs to be remembered that of utmost importance in pedagogical work is to build proper interpersonal relations based on trust and friendliness, and to create atmosphere of co-operation, reward acceptable behaviour and consequently punish those who “break” these rules.

### 3.2. Three methods of confrontational pedagogy (AAT/CT/KST)<sup>24</sup>

In 1986, at the request of the principal of a juvenile delinquency facility in Hameln – in co-ordination with the Ministry of Justice in the Lower Saxony, an interdisciplinary group was established with an aim to create an “anti-aggression training” to treat perpetrators, depending on the offence they committed, thus reducing the problem of aggression. The author, who in 1986 as an intern at a juvenile delinquency facility in Hameln, run studies to his PhD, was included into the operating group comprising of psychiatrists, teachers, social workers and sociologists. Thus, he could apply his experiences collected while working with gang members in the USA at Glen Mills School, Philadelphia.

It needs to be emphasised that Glen Mills School does not run an anti-aggression training and does not adjust the therapy to the type of an offence, neither do they use the so-called “hot chair” technique, but they work on daily basis within a group training (GGI) where everyday conflicts appearing in the life of young people are solved verbally, without the use of aggression. The adopted style of work, run with passion and in the confrontational style, had much impact on AAT/CT methods.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, p. 12.

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, p. 10.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem, pp. 10-12.

### 3.3. Confrontational training of social competences (KSK) for teenagers at school – on the border of school and vocational learning Basic assumptions and framework conditions<sup>25</sup>

Traditional teaching methods and care of social workers are not an effective concept, neither they are a method that would solve problems of no competences or social adjustment in many young people and their huge problems with behaviour. Conflicts are in excess – thus, it becomes more important to pass on skills and social competences that would help the young people exist at school, while learning their profession and at work, and deal with peers, teachers, coaches, colleagues, superiors, etc. The main challenge here is “dealing with others”, developing the skills of responsible conduct, solving problems and team work.

The main aim of confrontational training of social competences (KSK) is current and preventive support of social and professional skills of the young people who found themselves in difficult social conditions. This concept is based on tried and tested practical and theoretical experiences of prof. Bandura and prof. Weidner, the founders of “special” social trainings and confrontational pedagogy, but also by a psychologist, dr Jugert and prof. Petermann and the social training of competences for the young people called “Fit for life.”<sup>26</sup> The structure of the project, which is the basis of the concept – its aims, target groups and partners – were the reasons why the following problems started to be dealt with both in theory and in practice: social competences, its basics and possibilities of supporting young people, creating and testing modules of confrontational training of competences (KSK) and improving the professional skills of coaches and people qualified at schooling, vocational preparation, supportive institutions or juvenile delinquency facilities.

<sup>25</sup> The description of the method on the basis of the following texts: M. Jetter-Schröder *et al.*, “Interventionsprogramm für verhaltensauffällige Schüler (InvaS). Ein Kooperationsprojekt von Stadtjugendamt, Staatlichem Schulamt und Polizeipräsidium Mannheim”, in: U. Koch-Laugwitz (ed.), *Konfrontative Pädagogik – neue Handlungsstrategien...*, pp. 16-26; R. Büchner, M. Ziegler, „Was tun mit den Schwierig(st)en?“ *Ein Interventionskonzept für (mehrfach-) auffällige, aggressive Schülerinnen an Berliner Schulen*, 2004, <http://www.soziales-training.de/down/Interventionskonzept.pdf> [accessed: 16.01.2015]; R. Büchner, M. Ziegler, “Konflikt- und Teamkompetenz ist trainierbar! Konfrontatives Soziales Kompetenz-Training (KSK) für Jugendliche an der Schnittstelle von Schule-Ausbildung-Beruf”, in: U. Koch-Laugwitz (ed.), *Konfrontative Pädagogik – neue Handlungsstrategien...*

<sup>26</sup> R. Büchner, M. Ziegler, “Konflikt- und Teamkompetenz...”, p. 58.

In confrontational training of competences it is all about a “special” manual tested in practice, which aims at developing social competences and prevention for youth with behaviour disorders. KSK is based on cognitive paradigm. It means that KSK wants to positively influence aggressive and anti-social behaviour of youth and their problematic approach to society. The motto is: “Understand abnormal behaviour but do not agree to it!”

### **Features of confrontational training of social competences (KSK)**

The areas of application are to do with prevention at school in the field of vocational preparation and education, supportive institutions, courts for minors, court supervision and juvenile delinquency facilities.

Time framework include two-three-hour group meetings per week, overall 40 class hours per semester, additionally there are individual talks and group projects as well as their preparation and discussion.

The size of groups is maximum 10 people, two coaches with university preparation (pedagogy, social work, psychology), including one person after a KSK course and a young assistant (youth is best educated by youth). After a successful completion of a course, a certificate is issued that may be attached to job applications.

KSK is based on faith in the positive nature of man, acceptance but also lack of consent to abnormal behaviour: 80% of empathy is complemented by 20% of confrontation (in conflict situations).

KSK is not an addition to regular classes but an innovation, a means to professionalization, guarantee of the quality of development in pedagogical work for schools and educational institutions. KSK is copyright protected by U.P. Munich.

### **Certificate**

Programme of the training includes 40 class hours in modules: improving and supporting one’s own responsibility, ability to manage conflicts at work and team work. A participant gains key qualifications, i.e.:

- concentration and perseverance,
- motivation for learning and succeeding,
- communication skill,
- perception of himself and others,
- his own image and realistic evaluation,
- self-control and steering one’s own behaviour,

- empathy and readiness for co-operation,
- accepting praise and criticism, overcoming failures,
- rational (deprived of aggression) behaviour in conflict situations.

### Target groups<sup>27</sup>

A target group are primarily young people with abnormal behaviour who are mentally and linguistically ready to face the training. The following groups should be mentioned:

- learning youth who prepares for profession,
- youth who did not graduate from the so-called *Hauptschule*,
- youth who dropped out of school or vocational school,
- youth included in the projects of institutions supporting learning a profession,
- minors who are foreigners, immigrants, displaced and resettled.

The problem of these young people is inability to deal with creating social competences. This has a traumatic impact on their personal, but also professional and social life. Bystanders as well as experienced pedagogues frequently are faced with a question: "Can't they or won't they?"

Prof. Bandura<sup>28</sup> created a notion that abolishes the contradiction between "can" and "want". Depending on what experiences we collected and how we evaluate our skills needed to achieve the goal and perform a task, we activate the resources and competences accordingly. If youth experience that their own actions lead to achieving the goals, then their personality is strengthened and their trust in their own abilities grows, because usually the so-called "difficult youth" is hardly successful and do not associate the results of their actions with their behaviour, they also have a tendency to doubt the effectiveness of their activities.

The primary aim of our work is thus creating faith in one's own effectiveness, developing it as a competence so that an individual could finally learn to treat a failure as another challenge.

### Aims of the training

Including the key qualifications, important in the context of work - the following aims of the training were created:

<sup>27</sup> M. Jetter-Schröder *et al.*, "Interventionsprogramm für verhaltensauffällige Schüler...", pp. 16-26.

<sup>28</sup> R. Büchner, M. Ziegler, "Konflikt- und Teamkompetenz...", p. 61.

- 1) building up awareness of responsibility for one's own thinking and behaviour;
- 2) supporting activities as competences, pro-social behaviour, the sense of morality and reducing abnormal patterns of behaviour;
- 3) strengthening the sense of trust and self-value;
- 4) understanding the rules at school and in professional life;
- 5) realistic evaluation of one's own role at school and working environment;
- 6) ability to accept a social role without fearing to lose identity or self-denial;
- 7) exercising basic communication abilities so as not to react with aggression or withdrawal in conflict situations, e.g.:
  - ability to verbalise positive and negative feelings,
  - expressing opinion or anger without hurting others,
  - demand to assert one's rights,
  - defending from unfair treatment,
  - facing criticism and ability to criticise others in an appropriate way,
  - having courage to ask questions,
  - having courage to ask for help,
  - being composed and friendly towards others.

### **Methods of training**

Many young people have only negative associations when thinking of school, that is why the training has an attractive form and no evaluation is performed. Instead, qualifications are gained. There is no frontal teaching or evaluating knowledge.

In KSK approach it is all about methods basing on cognitive theories of teaching. Concentration concerns dealing with conflict situations, e.g. as part of individual provocation tests or during the analysis of stimuli that provoke aggression (on the basis of decreasing sensitivity). Cognitive approach is to change the attitude in aggressive or abnormal behaviour, particularly in relation to increasing empathy.

### **Role play**

Role play (*Rollenspiel*) is the main method used to safely practise ways of behaviour with young people, without putting them in too much danger. The aims are: to learn to name and analyse a problem. To exercise social behaviour, modify it and fit in a comprehensive way. It is all

about broadening the spectre of behaviour and at the same time about increasing self-confidence. Questions that rise that concern the mental change provoke to reflection on the learnt content. Minors are to transfer the elaborated solutions onto the situations in their real life.

### **Exercising behaviour**

Exercising a real situation in role play remains in close connection with the instruction to observe oneself and control one's behaviour. It refers to *Rollenspiel* when the participants are to control their new type of behaviour using an observation sheet, studying a certain aspect. Exercising behaviour during the training gives a possibility to train particular social competences that are indispensable in more complex activities.

### **Rules of behaviour**

One of the basic aims of confrontational training of competences (KSK) is to create new, appropriate and pro-social ways of behaviour in young people. Achieving that is possible thanks to clear and understandable rules, and drawing consequences in case they are violated.

Experience shows that it is not hard to reach a consensus among the participants as for the necessity to create rules. They agree immediately that there must be rules, thus it is possible to apply the so-called "confrontation principle", i.e. consequences may be practised in case on their violation. Rules of behaviour are not only intensely discussed at the onset of the training, but they also include a certain ritual during which the participants name the stipulated rules on a group forum, and they also evaluate whether the rules have been followed after each meeting.

Because of that a contract is signed at the beginning of the training, which is the basis of co-operation. Dealing with the rules of behaviour supports self-control and steering one's own behaviour. Experiences that are intentionally directed build up the effectiveness of one's actions, one of the most important elements of responsibility and social competences development.

#### CONTRACT

I .....  
 hereby oblige myself to follow the rules below throughout the whole training:  
 - I listen when others talk!  
 - I don't get offended, threaten or hurt others!

- I don't bully or laugh at anyone!
- I follow the coaches' instructions!
- "Stop" means ceasing any activity!
- I keep to myself whatever has been talked about during the training and I don't talk about it with others!

Apart from group methods, we also use the method of "self principle". It begins with the ways we behave an individual must change because they are in opposition with social behaviour. It may be done on the basis of the following questions:

- 1) what really gets on your nerves in the class (group)?
- 2) which types of personal behaviour in the class (group) harmed you the most so far?
- 3) will you indicate the types of behaviour in the class (group) that you'd like to change?

Once a rule is created, it is written down on an observation sheet or in a register. ("What do I want to observe in myself until the next meeting?" or "What am I going to do?") and then it is regularly checked at every meeting by coaches and participants whether it has been followed.

### **Rituals**

During the confrontational training of social competences (KSK) the participants receive an instruction to frequently verbalise their feelings, aims and interests. At the beginning of every meeting, a verbalisation skill is trained through "initial ritual", determining the mood using information cards that may also take on different functions. The participants receive yellow, green and red cards. The young people are asked to show their mood at the moment. Green means "good", red "bad" and yellow "average". Youth may, but don't have to, comment on their cards. The cards are used when evaluating the whole meeting and during the evaluation of the elaborated group rules.

### **Relaxation**

Many minors suffer from concentration disorders, nervousness and hyperactivity. Carrying out relaxation exercises increases concentration and - in the long run - has positive impact on health. We use progressive muscle relaxation according to Jacobsen,<sup>29</sup> which is

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<sup>29</sup> Ibidem, p. 65.

particularly beneficial for boys. It is based on tensing muscles for a short time and then releasing this tension, which - in turn - provides a feeling of relaxation.

### **Meeting structure**

Maintaining a constant structure of a meeting supports the feeling of safety and develops trust to coaches. Constant elements of the game guarantee understanding and clarity and better concentration on the content of the meeting. A meeting usually includes the following elements:

- determining mood,
- discussing rules,
- warm up,
- work with a module,
- relaxation,
- evaluation, analysis and transfer,
- finish.

### **Behaviour of a coach/instructor**

Participation in the training is a challenge not only for the youth but also for the coaches. They must become familiar with the aims, methods and content, learn them and be convinced by the idea itself. Every meeting requires intense preparation. A skill of how to conduct a training successfully can be learnt and the coach's behaviour can be transferred. Further work is possible only if coaches are motivated and enjoy the realisation. Also the minors must be motivated. Only those who actively participate in the training succeed and empower their competences. If there is a spirit of co-operation, trust must be built between the coaches and the participants. The following recommendations proved effective as far as behaviour is concerned.

### **Creating trust and motivation**

The training must have a clear and transparent structure. It would be good if the participants talked about their previous experiences with successful trainings so as to show the benefits of them. Young people need positive opinions that will put them in the right frame of mind and will motivate them. They need to be incorporated into the course of the training and asked about their likes and interests. Any violation of

the rules ought to be reacted to immediately by the coaches, following the rules of confrontation. Special attention should be paid to separating people and behaviour, to explaining reasons of failure and working on improvements. The coaches should praise and show joy, but they are also entitled to justified anger so as to maintain authenticity of the meeting. Even the slightest progress is worth noticing.

### **Motivating – the leading motto**

Youth should be treated and accepted as independent and autonomous individuals. The main motto is: "I'm interested in you, I'm not indifferent to you." Young people experiencing respect and interest in them and their problems, knowing that their problems are treated with confidentiality, feel motivated and activate during the training. In order to support their initiative, they need to be given the right to co-decide, e.g. when creating groups, including subjects they are particularly interested in. Also, transferring responsibility increases motivation, trust and co-operation. The coaches should pay attention to clear activities and the requirements they place, so as to achieve success that will - in the long run - lead to stabilisation of the self-esteem and efficiency. Moreover, youth receive varied and targeted feedback that helps in finding certainty connected with their behaviour. For many of them it is a new experience, even more important when praise and support is applied.

### **Feedback**

Feedback is of particular importance and is a crucial part of any coach's work. It helps in self-evaluation and regulates social behaviour. Particularly in the field of modification of attitude, abnormal behaviour is analysed, corrected and replaced with other types.

Positive feedback supports and maintains motivation of the participants to learn. Through this process, self-perception and the perception of others is trained, it also helps realise the differences between people.

In order to provide and get positive feedback, it is necessary to have special skills:

- feelings and needs must be expressed in the first person singular;
- behaviour should be described and not evaluated or interpreted, no moral evaluation should be given;
- we should refer to specific situations;

- we should discuss only such behaviour that we have some influence on;
- our observations should be also checked by others;
- provide immediate feedback - the sooner, the better;
- allow yourself the possibility of making a mistake;
- in the final part of the feedback, the participants ought to be asked about their impression.

Since during the training young people are encouraged to provide mutual feedback, the rules must be taught as to how to “clearly and precisely describe what stands out” and “express criticism in form of suggestions of improvement.”

### **Modules of learning**

The programme comprises of nine topics (an exemplary module “Self-confidence” is discussed below). Every module refers to a certain range of skills and competences, and is built in the following way:

- initially, the notion is explained as well as soft targets;
- suggestions of exercises are listed together with an appropriately stated target;
- working materials and instructions for the exercises must be interesting for young people;
- instruction of evaluation (evaluation, analysis and transfer).

Topics:

1. Motivation - means building up trust so as to strengthen the motivation to participate in the training.
2. Self-esteem - is a training in the field of perceiving social problems, creating grounds for greater trust and self-esteem.
3. Body language - knowledge on body language is provided, as well as varieties of perceiving it and conscious use.
4. Communication - allows to recognise the activities of different styles of communication, trains communication without violence.
5. Conflicts and aggression 1:
  - perceiving conflicts and aggression,
  - distinguishing a problem from a person,
  - teaching the skill of dealing with conflicts,
  - reducing hostile approach and strengthening peaceful coexistence.
6. Conflicts and aggression 2:
  - keeping calm despite provocation,
  - testing one’s own limits,
  - realising that the greatest failure of an instigator is ignoring provocation,

- analysis of group structure (culprit - victim - observer),
- increasing the level of anticipation.

7. Occupation and future (planning life) - it teaches how to differentiate closer and more distant goals, seeing a viewpoint, thoughts and feelings of others, predicting reactions of others to our behaviour.

8. Feelings - perceiving our own feelings and the feelings of others, expressing them in an appropriate way, seeing a viewpoint, thoughts and feelings of others, predicting reactions of others to our behaviour.

9. Empathy - improving the perception of the viewpoint, seeing a viewpoint, thoughts and feelings of others, predicting reactions of others to our behaviour, and including it in our behaviour.

10. Praise and criticism - it is an exercise on how to deal with justified and unjustified criticism, how to accept praise from others.

#### EXEMPLARY DESCRIPTION OF "SELF-CONFIDENCE" MODULE

##### Intentions/goals

Young people should get to know each other better and be able to express their impressions. They should gain self-confidence in contacts with peers and learn how to establish contacts with less known people. Moreover, they learn the skill of observation through differentiating between behaviour that is certain and less so.

Suggestion of an exercise No 1: "Steps to create the sense of self-confidence"

The notion of self-confidence is discussed. Then everyone evaluates themselves on a scale 1-10 and justifies their evaluation in front of the group. Finally, everyone receives a task to stand in front of the group and present, e.g. their last weekend.

Suggestion of an exercise No 2: "Interview - 3 strong, 3 weak sides, one bad deed"

Young people ask each other questions and present the collected information to the group.

##### Suggestion of an exercise No 3: "A trained eye"

Young people learn to differentiate certain and uncertain, and aggressive types of behaviour, and they reflect on the consequences. Young people play roles that are recorded on a video camera, e.g. "How do I approach people when I don't know anyone at school?" The exercise is performed in small groups (3-4 people) in three variations (uncertain, certain, aggressive behaviour), then the recordings are discussed.

### **Analysis and transfer**

Young people are very reluctant to discuss the exercises. The analysis is only effective when it is possible to accomplish a transfer of the situations onto everyday life. Six questions were created for every exercise and they could have been adjusted or exchanged. There were three levels of evaluation:

1) the first question concerns emotional level: did the participants feel pleasure, joy during the exercise?

2) two other questions concern understanding of the exercise: did they understand the goal?, what did the participants learn?

3) the last question concern transfer: when did they experience such a transfer?, where can they apply it?

The most important part of analysis is transfer. In many groups different cultures are represented, many do not speak German on an appropriate level. They are encouraged to present examples from their own countries; in case of language problems, visualisations, collages or pantomime are used.

### **Module application**

Individual parts of material and content are adjusted to each group. The tasks may be simplified or more complex, but the character of confrontational training of social competences (KSK). Similarly, other modules may be approach in an equally flexible way, although their structure and order are deeply justified. There is no reason, however, to question the change of order, e.g. due to the interests of the participants. Due to the growing level of difficulty, no radical change of order is recommended, however.

### **Evaluation**

Evaluation of the training is thought to be indispensable. Clear and credible evaluation is of crucial importance for future projects and preventive programmes.

Evaluation is carried out on three levels. Students (participants) receive and fill in questionnaires at the beginning during and at the end of the training, then they are evaluated by their coaches and teachers as for their behaviour.

Evaluation is the objective basis for arguments supporting introducing this tried and tested training into practice.

#### 4. Chances of the social competences training

Including this training into curriculum is its success. Training of social competences and transferring values are not luxury goods but a basic condition of improvement of educational system. It is an innovative offer and a means to professionalisation, guaranteeing success and improvement of organisation at schools and other facilities.

1. Confrontational training of social competences (KSK) concerns supporting activities, pro-social ways of behaviour and transferring values.

2. Representatives of schools, institutions helping youth, economy, trade unions, police and justice department see in this programme a chance for the young people and institutions they co-operate with.

3. Improving competences of the young people is a preventive means at school and other facilities, and also is supportive in the moment of transfer – from school through learning a profession onto the professional life.

4. Improving qualifications, with particular emphasis put on communication, team work and problem solving, and responsible behaviour stands in line with requirements placed in front of the young people by enterprises and schools which teach a certain profession.

Confrontational pedagogy is not an individual educational theory, but more of a “socio-pedagogical way of performing” which is aimed at fostering one’s own responsibility for aggression towards others and respecting the right of others to inviolability, at the same time maintaining full respect for an individual. This operating style can also be observed in several different forms, in the leader’s approach who may move from informal influence on the young people to a more orderly approach to the group (or a few people). It may be characterised as such a direct approach which allows to work with youth more actively, so that they could see their mistaken interpretation of social signals and a distorted perception of reality, yet their aggression is interpreted as defence or some sort of “indifference”. The change requires distancing oneself from the rules and norms that are in the urban tribes, so that the level of sensitivity in wards towards others grows.

Further studies should show confrontational pedagogy as effective in preventing aggression in the long run, which could be extremely beneficial for the employees, youth, parents, victims and society. Perhaps the most interesting question is: how do confrontational pedagogy assumptions influence the attitude of a person working with youth? What is also important, is thinking around building a relation with abusers.

Confrontational pedagogy is not a new method, neither is it a remedy in preventing violence. There are, however, clear analogies to the already well-grounded programmes, exchange through trainings, cognitive-behavioural therapy and other techniques of working with the young people. It is rather presented as a complementary approach to other pedagogical practices that are in use.

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