die pädagogische
hochschule
oberösterreich

PROJECT NIGHTINGALE SOCIAL AND AFFECTIVE LEARNING

Theoretical Background

There has always been a need to integrate and include migrant pupils and pupils with special needs in Austrian schools. Since 2015 an increased number of refugees and heterogeneity of nationalities (2006: 9,25%; 2016: 13%; statistics Austria) and other L1 than German (2006: 15,6%; 2016: 23,8%; statistics Austria) has created a challenge for teachers.

Project Nightingale is a mentoring project in which children in underprivileged situations like migration background, insufficient language skills in their second language, children living in socially deprived families and generally children with low self esteem learn different ways of spending their free time meaningfully. This is done in tandem settings of one student teacher (mentor) of our university and one child (mentee) aged between 8 to 12 years, who has been nominated for the project by her/his class teacher.

Our interest is to find out which situations the mentors regard as significant learning situations and how that experience can be used for similar future situations with their mentees.

As a consequence these single significant learning situations should lead to gain relevant teaching competences in general. The mentoring process is accompanied by professional supervision and constantly developed according to evaluation data on mentors, mentees and organization.

RESEARCH QUESTION AND AIMS

Question:

Which educational competences and beliefs may be gained by student teachers (mentors) in the course of the project?

Aims:

- Student teachers should experience the problems faced by mentees and their families, and gain insight into unfamiliar contexts.

- Developing Project Nightingale by analysing diary entries of student teachers in order to optimize organisation, content and output.

- To implement Project Nightingale not only in the practical field of teacher training but also in selected Austrian schools as a mentoring programme.

METHOD & DATA ANALYSIS

Collecting data: Mentors write diary entries which are relevant for them („Significant learning situations") and follow a given pattern:

Describing the setting	Asking questions	Giving own explanations	Find theoretical evidence	Developing a new case approach	Transferring knowledge to general situations

- Analysing data: The data is taken from 78 diary entries (2015 - 2018) and discussed by qualitative content analyses. The data is then coded and individual cases are condensed and grouped into four major categories. These categories are defined by congruency and systematic team selection in relation to the research question and context. The samples of each category are then analysed and interpreted in order to develop concepts which lead to innovative action strategies.

8 SAMPLES OF SIGNIFICANT LEARNING SITUATIONS

1. Ambiguity:
„I was waiting for my mentee at our meeting place but she didn't come. When I saw her next time I didn't mention my annoyance." (Diary 1, 2018)
„Some minutes later my mentee asked me if she got on my nerves. I wasn't able to tell her the truth because I didn't want to hurt her feelings. Thus I said no and told her that I was just tired." (Diary 2, 2018)

2. Contacting:
X says: „My mum is at work and my dad hates being disturbed." (Diary 3, 2018)
„When I arrived at the arranged meeting place, my mentee wasn't there. As her elder brother had given me her father's phone number I called him but he didn't pick up the phone. Nor did her brother." (Diary 4, 2018)

3. Affectional *bonds*:
„*Meanwhile X sees me as* his ‚second mum'. I don't know what to do!" (Diary 5, 2018)
„More and more I (mentor) find out that you (mentee) have big problems to accept the typical relationship between pupils and teachers. You start acting like a clown and behave intolerably. The more relaxed, fair, respectfully and appreciatively I deal with you, the better you handle situations." (Diary 6, 2015)

4. Assumptions and Prejudices:
„When I got out of my car at the refugee camp for the first time I had a strange feeling. It cost me quite an effort to visit my mentee X and his family because of being observed by some young male refugees." (Diary 7, 2017)
„I have never been in a social market before and I have never even thought about what it may look like inside." (Diary 8, 2018)

INTERPRETATION - CONSEQUENCES - ACTION

Ambiguity:
- The mentor meets the challenge to find the balance between being a friend and being a respected person. She avoids expressing her real feelings because she is afraid of burdening her relationship with the mentee.
- This leads to a feeling of frustration because of the mentee's behaviour and her own not being authentic enough.
- The mentor should talk about her annoyance and her feelings at the next meeting and explain the reasons. Furthermore she should study some literature dealing with the topic authenticity.

Contacting:
- There are many reasons for parents to avoid contact. No interest in general or in the project, lack of communication skills, insecurity, thoughtlessness, challenging working circumstances, etc.
- This is a burdening situation for all people involved. The whole project will be negatively influenced.
- On the one hand it is necessary to respect both privacy and not to put pressure on the mentee. On the other hand it is worth trying to find the relevant reasons for the problem by clarifying the situation with the help of careful questions. The mentor continues her activities with the mentee as usual during the following meetings. If the mentor has the feeling that her mentee is ready to talk about the critical situation, she asks her trying to use professional communication skills which need to be trained.

Affectional bonds:
- Parental binding and mentor binding must be clearly separated. Stereotypes and problems of mentees might be prevented and reduced by attentive and respectful communication.
- The mentor feels insecure because she can't and doesn't want to fulfill her mentee's expectations. Intolerable actions of mentees unsettle mentors and need careful consideration. Showing respect leads to mutual benefit.
- The characteristics of being a role model as a mentor and acting as a parent must be reflected by the mentor in team and group discussions supervised by experts. The mentor informs her mentee about her role as a mentor. This is done both clearly and attentively.

Assumptions and Prejudices:
- Unfamiliar and unexpected situations cause insecurity and discomfort.
- Accepting, respecting or if necessary also avoiding different environment and living styles are possible ways to cope with.
- Next time the mentor tries to start small talk with refugees at the camp/ shop but also leads the mentee to experience his/her own world and surroundings.

FINDINGS: Individual thinking, group discussions and studying literature helped the mentors to transfer single learning situations to general ones and gain relevant teaching competences. These are self- competence, communicational competence, organisational competence and intercultural competence. The project now is well implemented in primary and secondary teacher education – even expanded this year. The evaluation of the data has clearly shown that it has been possible to gain new and essential experience because of challenging teaching situations for student teachers. Regarding that aspect it is a must to provide professional support by supervision in the course of the project.

References: Altrichter, H., Posch, P., Spann, H. (2018) Lehrerinnen und Lehrer erforschen ihren Unterricht. Bad Heilbrunn: Verlag Julius Klinkhardt.
Dörr, M. & Müller, B. (Hrsg.) (2013). Nähe und Distanz. Ein Spannungsfeld pädagogischer Professionalität. Weinheim und Basel: Beltz Juventa.

Kumbier, D., Schulz von Thun, F. (2006). Interkulturelle Kommunikation: Methoden, Modelle, Beispiele. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag.

Strübing, J. (2013). Qualitative Sozialforschung. München: Verlag Oldenburg.

Thiersch, H. (2012). Nähe und Distanz in der Sozialen Arbeit. In M. Dörr & B. Müller (Hrsg.), Ein Spannungsfeld pädagogischer Professionalität. (S. 32-49). Weinheim und Basel: Beltz Juventa.

AUTOR/IMPRESSUM/ LITERATUR

Author:
Karl Wegenschimmel: Leading coordinator of Project Nightingale at the Universitiy of Education Upper Austria. Staff member of the International Department.
karl.wegenschimmel@ph-ooe.at;

Author:
Margit Severa: Coordinator of Project Nightingale at the University of Education Upper Austria. Staff member of the Department of Primary Education.
margit.severa@ph-ooe.at;