

Student with ADHD Disorder in the Process of Dialogue Support in Inclusive Education

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The student with ADHD in the education system in Poland is treated as a student with special educational needs. Due to the current law about psychological and pedagogical assistance he needs specialist and educational support. In fact, these students have still low educational achievements and difficulties in social functioning. It turns out that their problems are still ignored or unnoticed. Accordingly, the author proposes the model of educational support which focuses on all kinds of teaching in practice such as instrumental, emotional and evaluative support. Planning assistance for people with such type of needs requires above all a comprehensive diagnosis of the situation which involves the development, the quality of the environment and the nature of their relationship with the environment, as well as the formulation of the objectives and program of impacts at several time scales - short, medium and long term, taking into account the current situation of socio-cultural student's capabilities and resources, and its environment. The following paper presents a proposal of social support for student with ADHD according to the model of the educational dialogue. The main task of the teacher and experts in education dialogue is TO KNOW, UNDERSTANDING and mutual support of BEING TOGETHER with the benefit of the student and the teacher. This proposal should encourage teachers and specialists to reflect, and to provide the right kind of support.

Introduction

In Polish education system students suffering from ADHD are considered to be students with special educational needs. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is known medical condition, affecting children and adults alike. Persons suffering from ADHD are seriously cognitively impaired and have behaviour disorders in important aspects of their lives (e.g. interpersonal or family relations in school

or at workplace). Those difficulties can be ascribed to problems with controlling impulses, hyperactivity, and attention disorders (Cooper & Ideus, 2001:25). Student suffering from ADHD is a great challenge for Polish teachers. Behaviour of hyperactive student is, most of the time, far from school standards and widely acceptable social norms. As a result problems for the teacher, as well as conflicts between the group and student suffering from ADHD arise. This, in turn leads to educational failures of the student suffering from ADHD. Studies on the matter (Opolska & Potempska, 1999:78) show that the more punishing and rejecting the school is, the more negative communicates it passes to the student, and the more mocking and rejection on the side of teachers and students a child with ADHD suffers, the worse is it's functioning in the school environment. Necessary condition to understand a child suffering from ADHD is that the teachers fully understand the problems and issues connected with the disorder. It is vital for setting norms and standards, to allow hyperactive child for social and educational functioning in school environment, while at the same time respecting safety regulations and common sense. In practice that means matching the educational methods and forms of teaching to the actual abilities of the student and realising his or her full potential. Moreover, it is important that the class understands and accepts that the student suffering from ADHD is different, and that the teachers understand that he or she has specific limitations.

Education of student suffering from ADHD brings number of challenges that need to be overcome. Hyperactive students are difficult to teach, as they require lot of effort on the side of the teacher, as well as more engagement, more acceptance, and much more patience. They require actions that are well-thought and consequent in order to achieve pedagogical success. Student with ADHD has specific difficulties with following the teacher's instructions as well as with obeying the school code of conduct. This can mark student-teacher relations in a negative way from the very beginning of the school year. Lack of emotional stability connected with physical hyperactivity of the student suffering from ADHD can cause open conflicts with his or her peers. In cases where hyperactivity is accompanied by mental development disorders, learning difficulties and failures may occur, what in turn strengthens the symptoms of ADHD.

This kind of student requires clear and consistent rules, precise time management, clear formulation of expectations he or she has to meet, and consequence in correcting his or her behaviour. Parents of hyperactive child should also, as much as possible, take part in school therapy of their child.

ADHD symptoms and their consequences

American psychologist, therapist and author of best-selling psychological books on dealing with children suffering from ADHD - D. Virtue, came to surprising conclusions in her work. She concluded that, children suffering from ADHD are 'children of new era' and that increasing number of children suffering the syndrome is a sign of our times and it heralds the new world. The author called the children suffering from ADHD *the indigo children* and assumed that they have special role in the world (Virtue, 2005:9). Hyperactivity is not only a reason for many problems with raising a child but also one of the reasons of educational failures (Mihilewicz, 2001:55). Reasons for school difficulties of hyperactive student are caused not only by his or her disturbed psychological construction. They are also rooted in the fact that the school structure is not only not matching hyperactive child's capabilities and needs but also it strengthens the symptoms of ADHD. Reasons for this are multifold – inadequate didactic or pedagogical methods, work overload, and lack of correct cooperation between teacher and hyperactive student.

Analysis of the results of the study done among children having poor educational results shows that development disorders make it harder, to greater or lesser extent, to accomplish tasks and duties that are within reach of children without disabilities. The results of the visual perception disturbances that students with ADHD suffer are difficulties in correct speaking, writing, drawing, reading, and reading comprehension. Hyperactive child often encounters problems with distinguishing and naming objects in the pictures as well as with understanding the message conveyed in form of illustration. Motor anxiety and distracted attention are additional factors that make it harder to become silenced and concentrated on the task. Due to problems with clarifying thoughts, student suffering from ADHD makes numerous mistakes in their home works and in-class works. Dysfunctions of auditory perception cause problems with fluent speaking. They stem from highly limited vocabulary and problems with understanding the auditory material and drawing conclusions based on it. Moreover, hyperactive students have problems with writing based on auditory material. It is a result of lack of the abilities necessary for correct analysis of the auditory material received from teacher in form of either sentences or separate words. What is more, poor auditory memory causes problems with learning foreign languages and in memorizing information. Student suffering from ADHD is negligible when it comes to writing - he or she does not fit in the lines, does not connect separate letters. Moreover, he or she draws in an imprecise manner and his or her drawings are dominated by straight lines and poor colours. Disturbances in spatial orientation

cause difficulties in correct reading of maps and plans, problems with pointing correct directions, and differentiating left and right side of the body.

Dysfunctions of mental processes can be parallel to the dysfunction of motor ones. Cognitive hyperactivity, which is most problematic in educational sphere, results in difficulties in focusing attention, increased level of overt attention, rashness and sketchy nature of thinking. Hyperactive student does not want to engage in tasks that require maintaining focus for a long period of time and if he or she does so, he or she performs the tasks longer than average, often with poor effects. Moreover, he or she is easily distracted and frequently switches from one activity to another making impression that he or she is interested in multiple things at the same time, what can lead to giving poorly thought-out answers (Mozelewska & Zarzycka, 2001).

It turns out that students suffering from ADHD can also be characterised by lower than average intelligence score. Longitudinal research done at Developmental-Behavioural Paediatrics of GHS Children's Hospital in Greenville, SC, confirm this thesis (Shaw, Grime & Bulman, 2005). For five years researchers observed psychosocial development of 142 children with IQ score lower than average (average age (9;2). Throughout the 5 years of research 97% of children were regularly assessed by their teachers as unmotivated for school work and cognitive effort. According to the teachers, 76% of the children showed symptoms of impulsiveness and difficulties in focusing attention (19% were diagnosed with ADHD) and at the same time they showed significant level of aggressiveness and other behaviour disorders. 15% of children were diagnosed with opposition defiant disorder. During the time of the research 74% of the children had at least one disciplinary talk about, predominantly, getting into fights in the school premises. 12% were arrested during the 5 years of the research period. Despite the above mentioned disorders, it should be pointed out that most of the students suffering from ADHD present good level of mental capacity. However, symptoms of their disorder cause their educational results to be rather poor. Specialists point out that even though their intellectual potential and mental capacity is usually normal for their age, their school results are far below what they could be (Wolańczyk, 1999).

It is a fact that those development disorders of student suffering from ADHD, which make it harder for him or her to conform with parents and teachers requirements, can result in breakdown of his or her educational career. School difficulties, poor grades, and lack of successes have negative impact on self-esteem and motivation for learning

Student with ADHD and peer relations

When a child goes to school it enters new social environment – school class. Composition of the class is usually a matter of chance and at the same time it is usually a wide cross-section of attitudes, characters, personalities and moral standards. With time, class forms into a social group by means of practising everyday social contacts, establishing relations, and experiencing common problems and successes. Shape of the group is determined by the overall state of interpersonal relations between its members. Therefore, place of a particular student in the class's social group is extremely important in his or her social development, as it shapes his or her sense of belonging to the group. Accepted position in the group has positive influence on correct formation of student's personality. On the other hand, isolation or stigmatisation can have destructive consequences for emotional development and as a result strengthen the problems with hyperactivity. Rejection by the group can lower student's self-esteem, lead to depression and personality disorders. Rejection of the student suffering from ADHD can be a reason for his or her negative attitude towards the school and may cause him or her to attempt to find his or her place in informal groups such as subcultures, youth gangs, or sects. Position of student suffering from ADHD in a class social group is very much dependent on his or her attempts to cooperate with the teacher and the group. Students are constantly searching for permissibility of establishing relationships with peers and making friends (Janowski & Stachyra, 1985:43). Therefore, failures to do so are very hard to cope with. Lack of support from the group can lead to low self-esteem, loss of trust for people, and fear of social contacts. It is important to direct hyperactive student's activity in such a way to maximise his or her energy for socially acceptable purposes.

Educational support of a ADHD student

All of the listed actions can be collectively named as *educational support*. Educational support actions are all the actions targeted at adjusting organisation and fulfilment of didactic process for different students basing on their health, while at the same time maintaining educational standards. It is a kind of interaction undertaken between one or two sides of a problematic situation where information, emotions and instruments are exchanged.

Proper diagnosis of sources of school failures of the student is very important. Even more, if one considers the fact that ADHD is a disorder that affects not only teacher–student relations and student–

student relations but also child's family relations. Consequently, all forms of support of a hyperactive student undertaken by the teacher have to be done in close cooperation with parents. Only full awareness about the kind of disorders that affect student's learning and fast therapy give a real chance of proper further development of the student.

In Polish education system student suffering from ADHD receives an opinion from the psychological–pedagogical dispensary on adjusting the educational requirements of the core and subject curricula. The opinion also states the adjustments of educational and examination requirements that should be done considering individual psychophysical needs of the student and the kind of psychological–pedagogical support the student should receive at school. The opinion includes also information about typical symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Moreover, it provides information about the level of intellectual development (measured by psychological examination), and student's knowledge and understanding of school and social rules and norms. It should also include student's strong points and his or her interests as well as information about specific learning difficulties in specific subject areas. What is more, the opinion includes information about forms of psychological and pedagogical support that are adequate to the needs of the student, alongside with detailed explanation and justification of chosen forms of support, as well as detailed guidelines for teachers and students. Adequate support in psycho-social functioning of the students suffering from ADHD is important part of educational efforts.

Social support should be understood as "*type of social interaction which is undertaken by one or many participants of problematic, difficult, stressful or critical situation*" (Sęk & Cieślak, 2011:18). Social support is provided by important others i.e. family, friends, teachers, and specialists, by means of everyday social interactions. The goal of this kind of support is to reduce stress and to help in coping with difficult situations by companionship, creating sense of belonging and safety, and giving hope. Aside from emotional aspect of the support there is also an instrumental one, which manifests through the fact that due to the support given the person gets closer to coping with difficulties or solving the problem. Necessary condition for the support to be effective is providing adequate, for given person, form of help.

There are different types of social support and different persons who can provide it, moreover the persons who provide the support may change according to the age of the person supported. Following types of support are described as most common ones: informative, instrumental, emotional, and valuing (Tardy, 1985; Kmiecik-Baran, 1995; Sęk, 2001; Sęk & Cieślak, 2011). *Informative support* aims at the exchange of information in the process of interaction and thus

makes it easier to understand the situation or problem faced. It is also giving feedback about the effectiveness of remedial actions undertaken by supported person (Kmiecik-Baran, 1995; Sęk & Cieślak, 2011). *Instrumental support* is giving the supported person ready-made instructions about what he or she should do in the situation. It can be done in form of exchange of instruments (manners) of behaviour, gathered information, and material goods (Kmiecik-Baran, 1995; Sęk & Cieślak, 2011). *Emotional support* is conveying by means of social interactions emotions that support, comfort, reflect care and positive attitude towards he supported person. Supporting behaviours are conveyed by means of verbal and non-verbal communicates. They allow supported person to feel free of his or her tensions and difficult emotions. The effect of different kinds of support is increased mood, raise of self-esteem, and evoking of feeling of hope. It is very important stage in going through difficulties and it allows preparing for undertaking actions and opening oneself for further help (Kmiecik-Baran, 1995; Sęk & Cieślak, 2011). *Valuing support* is giving the supported person, by means of interaction, communicates such as: "You are important", "we could not do it without your help" (Kmiecik-Baran, 1995). Following sources of supporting persons can be identified: parents, siblings, friends, neighbours, teachers, and other persons who are professionally trained for it.

Research done by the author on a group of 13 years-old (6th grade of primary school) suffering from ADHD (N=80) showed that they receive mostly informative support on the side of teachers (M=8.9). It turned out that teachers also provide various types of different support. Emotional support was at the level of (M=7.31), valuing on the level of (M=5.41) and instrumental on the level of (M=5.21). Reported teachers attitude which focuses predominantly on instrumental support, as well as difference between intensiveness of this form of support and other forms, signals a need for a closer examination of teachers education on both universities and continuous education courses. It is worth to check whether materials for teacher training do not overestimate the role of informative support and whether the materials are not too much directed on this type of support. Moreover, the study showed that from all sources of support, students suffering from ADHD feel that they have the most support from their mothers (M=37.91%) and fathers (O=36.52%), followed by their peers (K=35.42%), and that they get the least support from their teachers (N=25.73%). This results are disturbing if one takes into consideration the belief about importance of the role of the teacher.

Results presented above give raise to a need of presenting such an educational model that will include all types of support in pedagogical practice. That means using not only informative but also

instrumental, emotional and valuing support. According to the model created by the author (Al-Khamisy, 2013:126) educational dialogue is special type of complex behaviour towards self and Others, understood as teachers, students, and other partners of the dialogue. It is experiencing self and Others, being with self and Others. It is a cognitive "getting closer", meeting oneself and Others, and at the same time keeping unique self towards other people. It is discovering humanity of self and Others while at the same time accepting and offering self and partner of a dialogue. It is opening of self and Other potential, entering into relations with him or her and being authentic at the same time. It is frequent conversation with oneself, which results in deep thoughts about oneself and changes. It is discovering one's Otherness. It is a shared travel to find out and discover something unknown, explain something incomprehensible, check something uncertain, assess something that raises doubts, it is creating something new and useful. It is bringing closer the viewpoints of teacher and students in the atmosphere of kindness and respect in order to cooperate. It is a special kind of meeting which causes a cognitive "getting closer" resulting from self-understanding and understanding of Others, up to the point of relationships of educational friendship, realised by being together with otherness. In such understood educational dialogue there are three main, overlapping levels that can be distinguished: knowing, understanding, and being together (Al-Khamisy, 2014).

Proposition of supporting student with ADHD

Supporting student suffering from ADHD in the above mentioned model of educational dialogue allows for understanding of social support as complex process of interactions between the teacher and the student in all four areas of support: informative, instrumental, emotional, and valuing. Each type of the support is included on each level of the model but to a different degree. Therefore, in the model proposed there is no clear distinction between different types of support and different levels of the model. The proposal of supporting student suffering from ADHD in the dialogue model was presented in the picture below.

To know: The knowledge about different sources and types of support, knowledge about ADHD, strong and weak sides of the student, his or her interests, family, school, and peer group situation, legal solutions, and different forms of support.

To understand: Understanding of the rules, the need for support, reasons for specific needs and symptoms of a student suffering from ADHD, functioning of the hyperactive student in social roles, limits of

support, creating proper conditions for individual development of the student.

To *be together*: to provide adequate support, depending on the developmental and educational needs and situation, in such a way that changes the quality of life and helps but at the same time does not absolve; to support student in such a way that he or she will not need help in future; to create situations that result in the most possible positive experiences for the student.

In the process of supporting student suffering from ADHD TO KNOW means, according to the above proposed model, to acquire as much information as possible that provide teacher with insight about him- or herself and about the student suffering from ADHD and his or her closest social environment. Self-understanding and understanding of the subject of educational actions gives teacher the scope of competences necessary for full realisation of the support on the first level and therefore is necessary for supporting student at the second level - UNDERSTANDING. This level requires the teacher to understand the process of supporting the student, what means being fully aware and fully convinced about:

- The need of providing all kinds of support (informative, instrumental, valuing, and emotional) including individual needs of the student suffering from ADHD.
- Motivations for attitudes and behaviours towards student suffering from ADHD
- Need for observation and recognising the emotions of the student suffering from ADHD in different educational situations connected with both educational successes and failures.
- Recognising and understanding the symptoms of ADHD in the area of student's school skills.
- The need for conducting preliminary recognition and providing student with psychological-pedagogical support.
- The need for recognising and acknowledging student's strong sides as well as his or her limitations
- Reasons and motifs behind student's behaviour towards teachers, peers, and other people.
- Signs of empathy or lack of it
- Changes in forms of educating of student suffering from ADHD
- Individual pedagogical-didactic influences in the area of personalising the requirements, teaching methods, forms, and pace of work during classes and assessments.
- Cooperation with specialists, supporting personnel, and parents of the student suffering from ADHD in order to provide full pedagogical-psychological support
- The need for constructing a supporting curriculum and assessment of its effectiveness
- Motivational function of the assessment of student's work

- Need for cooperation with student, other teachers, specialists and parents of the student in order to create a "coalition" for the student
- Team formula of the teachers, tutors and specialists work for student's development
- Indicators of student's developmental and educational needs. On the level of understanding teacher is not only an observer, he or she becomes an interpreter in order to understand the ways student suffering from ADHD functions and how to provide him or her with adequate support that would include all types of support, i.e. informative, instrumental, emotional and valuing. Third, and the last level of educational dialogue model – BEING TOGETHER should be characterised by:
 - Change of attitudes, value systems, and use of the knowledge and competences
 - Realisation of the support in terms of fulfilling the needs of students suffering from ADHD
 - Cooperation with specialists, parents and other personnel in order to provide students with adequate support
 - Constructive and contemplative participation in the work of a team that develops the recommendations for supporting the student suffering from ADHD and monitors it's effects.
 - Making use of individuality of the student's suffering from ADHD, recognising his or her strong sides in the process of learning and teaching
 - Differentiation of the forms and methods of class work, using different didactic tools and techniques
 - Providing of support by the teacher during the lessons and outside of them as a natural part of the process, and withdrawing teacher's help when it take form of doing something for the student
 - Perceiving by the students the support provided by the teacher as a natural form of help and the ability to discard it when the student feels that he or she already has the necessary resources to cope with the situation.
 - Using knowledge and experiences of all the employees and parents in the process of education and treating them as an equally valuable sources of support for the teacher
 - Encouraging all the employees to develop their knowledge and abilities in the area of supporting the student

Student suffering from ADHD requires support from many social groups, but in the school he or she most of all need teacher's support. Depending on the situation he or she may require informative, instrumental, emotional or valuing support. It is important that teachers, tutors, peers and other important for the student persons provide him or her with adequate, to the difficult

situation at hand, support. It is important in the process of support that both supporting party and supported one knows their capabilities, expectations, strong sides and limitations, as well as scope of competences for giving and receiving support. Proposition of the process of supporting of student suffering from ADHD in this form should encourage teachers to think about the necessity of crossing the borders of their role as a teacher. They should be prepared for breaking the barrier in teacher–student with ADHD relations through workshops, trainings and other forms of professional development. In general teachers are not prepared to do preliminary diagnosis of the disorder or to provide help for students suffering from it. Even though the problem of ADHD is a profound one Polish schools lack diagnostic procedures and regulated forms of support for students suffering from it and their families. The process of supporting student suffering from ADHD requires, despite legislative circumstances, profound changes.

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