

TEACHER TRAINING FOR SECOND CHANCE SCHOOLS

VASILIKI ILIOPOULOU
SECONDARY EDUCATION TEACHER
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
GREECE
vaseliop@hotmail.com

Abstract: Second Chance Schools (SCS) address to young people aged over 18 who have not completed nine year compulsory education for a variety of reasons, such as because they failed at school or because they abandoned it due to lack of incentives. Surveys, which have been conducted in SCSs, have shown the reasons why SCS trainees have left compulsory education and they are grouped on family, learner and school reasons. In particular, family reasons refer to the needs and obligations of SCS students in their families, low income and poverty, care of other members of their family, even the long distance of their school from home. In addition, parents' mindset is also cited as a cause of school failure. The reasons related to the students-trainees refer to the immaturity they gave to themselves, to the recklessness and irresponsibility they gave at that time of their life, but also to the ignorance of the future usefulness of school. Intra-school factors are not lacking as a reason for leaving school and are related to negative experiences of the students-trainees in the formal school.

Key-Words: Adult education, second chance school, lifelong learning

1.1 Basic criteria in order SCS students to be chosen

Age is the first criterion for them to be chosen and enrolled in SCSs. In particular, the European Commission has adopted a minimum age limit for admission to a SCS, so that there is no risk of having a "parallel school network" that may degrade the functioning of compulsory education. In Greece, the priority age group is between 18 and 30 years of age.

Secondly, the social characteristics of SCS students are taken into account in order to be chosen. These characteristics include unemployment, underemployment and their need to improve working conditions, but also the need to socially reintegrate people belonging to vulnerable and vulnerable social groups such as prisoners, ex-prisoners, former drug users, single parent families, women with minor children, many children, etc. Finally, important criteria for inclusion are the availability and commitment of trainees to follow the curriculum (Ministerial Decision on the Organization and Operation of Second Chance Schools, 2008, GG B 34 / 16-01-2008: Article 8).

1.2 Characteristics of adult learners

The characteristics of adult learners refer mainly to their personality elements, which are shaped by the experiences they have gained during their lifetime and are an important knowledge for the trainer, who is required to use these elements as tools in shaping the teacher program. In addition, adults are constantly in a process of development, the principle of which is based on past changes and continues on the basis of new data, in this case their inclusion in SCSs (Rogers, 1999: 92-97).

According to Rogers (1999: 92), the most significant and most common features of adult learners are:

- Participants are by definition adults.
- They are in an evolving process of development, not in the beginning of a process.
- They carry with them a set of experiences and values.
- They come into training with given intentions.
- They come to SCSs with expectations in terms of the learning process.
- They have competitive interests.
- They have already developed their own learning models.

Adults are people who evolve, have specific intentions, expectations and interests. In addition, their individual experiences, ideas and values, which are important for their existence, make them an

important part of their experience, which makes trainers responsible for these experiences, minimizing any possibility of their devaluation or ignorance. The content of their education is therefore necessary to relate to their experiences and to use what they already know or apply in their everyday life (Kokkos, 2005: 86-93). An additional element that enhances the importance of experiences is the finding that adult learners have a strong needs to actively participate in processes that concern them (Kokkos & Lionarakis, 1998: 23-24).

The role of the trainer is, therefore, to use pre-existing knowledge (based mainly on experience) as a "reservoir" for new knowledge. The use of this knowledge and experience will contribute both to the individual development of the trained and the whole team (Rogers, 1998: 219). Experts argue that there are four ways in which experience is related to adult learning, highlighting its importance for the development of learners (Rogers, 1999: 92-105, Gray, 2005: 86-93).

- Experience is used as a learning tool.
- Learning takes place through the momentum to give meaning to the experience.
- Experience is more used to convert ideas than to accumulate new knowledge and skills.
- Experience acts as a "brake on knowledge".
- Adult learning is generally characterized by "greater emphasis on learning through social interaction and reflection on experience rather than learning through the transfer of knowledge and memorization".

In conclusion, we would say that all these different experiences that an adult gathers over time are used accordingly for the complete processing of the experiences, as well as the review of personal values and findings (Kokkos, 2005: 48-52).

1.3 Basic characteristics of SCS learners

SCS students-trainees are a specialized group of adult learners who share common characteristics with other adult learner groups but also some other special features. The common characteristics of SCS learners with other adult learners are mainly about how they learn (learning is based on pre-existing knowledge and experience).

A basic feature of SCS learners is that they are adults who have not completed nine year compulsory education and have a school leaving certificate. The priority age group is between 18 and

30 years of age, and their social characteristics are unemployment, their need to succeed in social reintegration (ex-prisoners, ex-drug users, single parent families, women with minor children, large families, etc.), underemployment and the desire to improve working conditions. In addition, SCS students-trainees, in order to obtain high school certificate, undertake to attend an intensive training program (Ministerial Decision on the Organization and Operation of Second Chance Schools 2008, GG B 34 / 16-01-2008: Article 10).

Many times, their expectations, which shape their particular characteristics, are also related to their experiences from their school years. What matters at that point is that most trainees adopt and manifest behavior similar to that of their school years, which is analyzed in the passive attitude and learning situation according to which teachers want to teach because they know everything, they are aware of everything.

2.1 Training of SCS trainers

The training of trainers, both in typical and adult education, takes the form of training, which takes place through specialized seminars. Training, therefore, as a process of enhancing and improving vocational and pedagogical training in a systematic way is the desire and need expressed by all teachers (adult education and typical education) throughout their careers. In particular, since efforts made in principle at national level and subsequently at European level do not meet these requirements of trainers, essential training that revolves around the needs of trainers is imperative. The role of the trainer is expanded, since he/she has to be tested daily as a pedagogue, as an animator, as a scientist, as a teacher for educational change but also as an autonomous personality.

The situation, in the field of teacher education, is marked by significant shortcomings. On the other hand, the adult education sector, in the context of Adult Lifelong Learning, of Adult General Education, appears to be in a better position as regards teacher education. The adult education sector is supported by autonomous or non-training programs previously organized by the Institute for Adult Education (IDEKE) and the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning (GGMBH). These programs train educators coming from typical education to cope with the special nature of SCSs (Kuturova, 2007: 21).

The main deficiencies that these programs are called to cover are not so much inadequacy in the subject matter, but in the way in which teachers have no previous experience, the philosophy and objectives of adult education. In addition, it has been found that the more years of experience a teacher has in formal education, the harder it is to integrate and follow the new facts (Kutrouba, 2007: 22).

Thus, so far, the educational programs of the teachers aim to integrate them in the "space" of adult education and, on the other hand, to the submission of pedagogical proposals, reflections and opinions of the "old" trainers. This is a process in which the improvement of the pedagogical position of the trainers comes from the experiences of the trainers themselves (Kutrouba, 2007: 23).

In SCSs, the alternative training model, that of in-school training, is being piloted in the region of Eastern Macedonia & Thrace. This program seeks to demonstrate that school-based training is particularly effective, arguing that central planning of training cannot take account of the specificities and needs of trainers (and trainees) locally.

More specifically, during in-school training, the whole process focuses on problems encountered in the particular school and is called upon to deal with specific trainers. Thus, risks of mismatches of needs and training can be addressed, as seen in typical training programs. In addition, trainers are more motivated to have more active action in the process, thus covering their personal interests (Kavadias et al 2000: 59).

2.2 Training of special group teachers (instructors)

It makes sense that teachers of special teams encounter more difficulties than instructors in an ordinary classroom. These difficulties revolve around classroom management, communication and adaptation of classroom learners. The inexperience of the trainers in working with such groups complicates their work and makes the need for immediate education and expertise to manage them imperative. Trainers and their relations with trainees, very often, determine the stay of the trainees in the program. Concerning the above, it is understood that it is required the trainers to be trained in order to take precedence over the training program in order to avoid the possibility of misinterpretations by the trainers such as the adoption of overly friendly behaviour by the team or

the very opposite, the adoption of excessively rigorous behaviour by the trainer (Tsimpoukli, 1999: 250).

2.3 Difficulties faced by special group teachers

The difficulties usually encountered by special group trainers are related to the dysfunctional behaviour of learners, which is due to the various experiences they have. These are expressed by anger, competition, attraction or avoidance and of course impede the educational process, as well as the relationship of trainees with the power, which in this case is represented by the trainers. Moreover, when the culture and the cultural level of the trainer with the trainees differ significantly, conflicts are inevitable (Tsimpoukli, 1999: 250).

However, the SCS teacher may face major difficulties, coming from the prison's environment and officials, who may criticize the teaching practices applied by the teacher (Irwin, 2008: 518), even hindering the educational work, at a practical level (lock classrooms or prevent students-trainees from going to the library etc.) (Irwin, 2008: 524).

2.4 New attitudes and attitudes of prison SCS teachers

Prison education is an intercultural phenomenon, a mixture of cultural features of education and cultural characteristics of life in prison (Wright, 2005: 36). Most teachers working in prison SCSs are almost at these schools by coincidence and not because they want it, and more often they do not have the proper supplies to handle their difficult work. It is reasonable, therefore, that at least the initial experience is not intimate, since it presents enormous differences with school reality outside of prison (Wright, 2005: 19).

Prison SCS teachers, in order to be able both to handle problematic classroom behaviour or to avoid conflicts, and to achieve their goals (which are to promote knowledge, to offer the appropriate supplies for their reintegration and to personal development of trainees), they must adopt new attitudes as well as develop new skills. More specifically:

- Eliminate stereotypes and prejudices concerning prisons.

- Recognize the rights of prisoners and, by extension, human rights.
- Be able to prevent and manage situations that may lead to conflicts within the group.
- Take, continually, into account the conditions of exclusion in which these individuals live and the activities they choose in the learning process.
- Be flexible in adapting teaching practice to the heterogeneity and educational level of the group.
- Adapt their speech and techniques at the group level so that the learning process is understandable and approachable.
- To show interest in what is said by the prisoners - learners, whether they relate to the learning process or to personal issues (within the boundaries of the trainer / trainee relationship).
- Understand how learners use their personal experiences in the educational process, either correctly or wrongly, and do not consider anything self-evident.
- Have the opportunity to develop a dialogue that will provide learners with information about interest in monitoring reintegration programs, etc.
- Be able to provide information on governmental and non-governmental organizations providing counseling and support services to prisoners such as OAED, General Secretariat for Adult Education, Accompanying Support Services Centers, Resettlement, etc. (Tsimpoukli, 1999: 250).

It is evident from the above that prison SCS teachers must have additional "supplies" in relation to any other teacher, either in a SCS or in a typical school, since they have to deal with a particular group of trainees and on the other hand they have to work in a non-familiar working environment, that of the prison. It is not, therefore, required by a SCS teacher to cope with the usual difficulties faced by other teachers, nor is it necessary to be prepared and trained to cope with these conditions. But even if he / she is prepared for the specific work environment, he / she should be primarily a personality and then an educator flexible to be able to adapt to anything new and different he / she can present during his / her work in prison SCSs.

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