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Student's possibilities on development a key competences - academic preparations of social pedagogy study program on Czech Republic

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Abstract

Problem Statement: Education on academically board and development of key competences for praxis, in country of East Europe, is a serious problem on a process of designed study programs of social pedagogy (Chudy, 2009). In an educational field on academically board and in a development the competencies there are a great gap on a process of the solutions the open social situations. The psychosomatic preparation is one of these competencies. The second one is an exploration of a situation as a key determination of competences during university studies. The results of this research process are new study disciplines of a psychosomatic preparation, personal and social competencies (decision) development.

Purpose of Study: The present study examined how student's were associated a statements on questionnaire. After evaluations results we construct or re-construct the valid concepts of a new disciplines on psychosomatic preparations.

The subjects in the study were a 150 regular student's on TBU University (in the present time we are a second group – 150 students of Palacky University). Participants were tested by non standard questionnaire. The questionnaire is processed as a 4 subtests for using a part of competencies, practice, qualifications and personal aims on a process of development key competences. Evaluations are processed by statistics software Statistica 9 and Chic.

Research Methods: The subject in the study was a 150 regular student's on TBU University (in the present time we are a second group – 150 students of Palacky University). Participants were tested by non standard questionnaire. The questionnaire is processed as a 4 subtests for using a part of competencies, practice, qualifications and personal aims on a process of development key competences. Evaluations are processed by statistics software Statistica 9 and Chic.

Findings: Results show a great impact of study preparation, creativity, personal aims and partially of a qualifications and practice experiences of students.

Conclusions: The impact of our research activities we show on preparations of Psychosomatic preparation for a practice social pedagogy on society. It also includes a comparison of two approaches concerning personal and social development of social pedagogy students.

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1. Introduction - Social Pedagogy and Its Scientific Conception

Over the past few years the Czech as well as Slovak Republic and other countries in the „former Eastern bloc“ have witnessed the renewal and expansion of social pedagogy which has been fully integrated into the social sciences system. Apt theoretical definitions have been given and thorough comprehension of the discipline has been proven by numerous authors (Bakošová, 2005, Hroncová, 2007, Kraus, 2008, Selická, 2010 etc.). Theoretical definitions of the discipline have been discussed at many conferences and in the works of the above-mentioned authors. The fundamental definition for our research has been provided in „four basic dimensions“ (Bakošová, 2005 p. 62).

- as pedagogy of the environment,
- as pedagogy shaping a man,
- as pedagogy of assistance,
- as pedagogy exploring deviations in one’s conduct“.

This fundamental definition inspired us to prepare research materials which dealt with similar themes such as whether students understand the field of their studies, whether they know „what they study“ and how students will succeed in the labour market. The research on social pedagogy does not constitute an exception either in the Czech or Slovak Republic, but a great deal of research has been devoted to partial or marginal themes of social pedagogy. Many of those marginal themes are a popular choice for diploma, bachelor’s or doctor’s theses and dissertations which are currently being worked on in other academic disciplines. Nevertheless, these theses do not deal with the substance of social pedagogy in depth (definition of the discipline, terms, specifics or codification of graduates’ profiles, social pedagogue’s specialization etc.), instead they concentrate on a wide range of topics (particular issues such as communication, bullying etc.). The above-mentioned discrepancy between ideas and content has led to preparation of research materials on similar issues. Our research attempts to identify competence attitudes and the development of competences and to map the issues related to social pedagogues’ preparation. Our research has been carried out in several parts – subtests (Chudý et al., 2009, 2010).

2. Key information’s to research

This paper presents the results of one partial research. We briefly (considering the scope of article) comment on the results of the second subtest focused on students’ skills and competences which they consider crucial for a social pedagogue’ work. We interpret here initial results of questionnaire survey carried out among social pedagogy graduates at TBU in Zlín. The survey sample was intentionally selected from the 1st and 3rd year full-time students - 140 students in total. However, only 124 questionnaires were analyzed as some had to be discarded as they were incomplete or did not comply with the instructions. The analyzed questionnaires were distributed in the years of study in the following manner: 68 respondents were recruited from the 3rd year and 56 students were recruited from the 1st year. The overall age distribution as well as gender distribution is shown in the descriptive statistics of the sample. (Table no.1 and 2.).

Table 1. Sample: 1st year full-time students

	Contingency table (1 st year)								
	sex	age 19	age 20	age 21	age 22	age 23	age 24	age 30	Line total
Frequency	male	3	3	2	1	0	1	0	10
Overall frequency		5,36%	5,36%	3,57%	1,79%	0,00%	1,79%	0,00%	17,86%
Frequency	female	15	24	2	2	1	1	1	46
Overall frequency		26,79%	42,86%	3,57%	3,57%	1,79%	1,79%	1,79%	82,14%
Frequency	All	18	27	4	3	1	2	1	56

	Contingency table (1 st year)								
	sex	age 19	age 20	age 21	age 22	age 23	age 24	age 30	Line total
	groups								
Overall frequency		32,14%	48,21%	7,14%	5,36%	1,79%	3,57%	1,79%	

Table 2. Sample: 3rd year full-time students

	Contingency table (3 rd year)							
	sex	age 21	age 22	age 23	age 24	age 25	age 26	Line total
Frequency	male	1	3	2	0	1	0	7
Overall frequency		1,47%	4,41%	2,94%	0,00%	1,47%	0,00%	10,29%
Frequency	female	16	37	5	2	0	1	61
Overall frequency		23,53%	54,41%	7,35%	2,94%	0,00%	1,47%	89,71%
Frequency	All groups	17	40	7	2	1	1	68
Overall frequency		25,00%	58,82%	10,29%	2,94%	1,47%	1,47%	

Opinions of students of the discipline, graduates' reflections on the profession as well as an implementation of state employment policy and competitiveness of the graduates represent important phenomena of contemporary "applied" social pedagogy. From the stated themes, the issue of perception of the discipline by students studying it or wishing to study it should be examined as well as the change in their perspective on information and skills provided while studying. A very good indicator seems to be the central evaluation of the faculties providing programmes in the field of study or monitoring the overall statistics of Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and National Institute of Education. These aspects were considered when defining research objectives and choosing data collecting and evaluation methods.

3. The Research – Basic Methodology

The basic goal of the research – in the second subtest – is to compare the 1st year students' opinions with the 3rd year students' opinions in the chosen field of social pedagogy. Social pedagogy was chosen as the research sample also because the author of the paper prepared the curriculum of the programme and lectured at TBU from 2003 to 2010). Social pedagogy comes under Specialization in Pedagogy programme which is accredited in both bachelor's and master's degree in full time and part-time programmes. The main goal of the research was:

- to identify students' opinions on skills and competences
- to monitor students' opinions on the necessity of skills and competences
- to map relations among individual skills and competences
- to comprehend qualitative changes in the attitude to students' field of study

To obtain data we designed our own questionnaire with four subtests where the subtest no.2 relates to the discussed issues. This subtest contains questions on skills and competences. The subtest offered 34 statements

referring to social pedagogue's skills and competences needed to perform successfully socio-pedagogical activities (the list of statements – appendix no. 1.)

The statements introduced to respondents activities which represented overall skills and competences – competences of a social pedagogue (Bakošová, 2005). Respondents were supposed to select one out of four options rated 0 to 4, where 0 meant below average and 4 meant above average grading the need to apply skills and competences acquired in practice. The research sample was purposely selected from all the 1st and 3rd year full-time students. The total number reached 140 students. Out of that number, we only analyzed 124 questionnaires as the others were discarded for incompleteness or failure to comply with instructions. The analyzed questionnaires were distributed among the respondents in the following manner: 68 respondents were the 3rd year students, 56 were the 1st year students. (Chudý a kol. 2010).

4. The Research – Data Analysis

When analyzing data, we preferred quantitative methodology principles and statistical data processing. The analysis was carried out in three following steps:

- the response analysis
- the response categorization
- statistical processing using Statistica 9 and Chic software

In the next phase, the data were subjected to content and statistical analysis. We primarily used non-parametric tests to compare means and dispersion which suited best to the data layout and their nature.

Cluster analyses and implicative statistical analyses were used to sort out categorical data.

Graphically, icon diagrams are used for multidimensional research methods while line charts are used for single dimensional research methods.

4.1 Students' Opinions on Social Pedagogy Programme – Selected Data Analysis

The empirical research outcome analysis was carried out as a partial results analysis. We present these results in a short analysis and interpretation accompanied by graphic and table charts for a better orientation of the reader.

In subtest no. 2 we asked questions – statements the aim of which was to reveal important students' skills and competences when performing socio-pedagogical work.

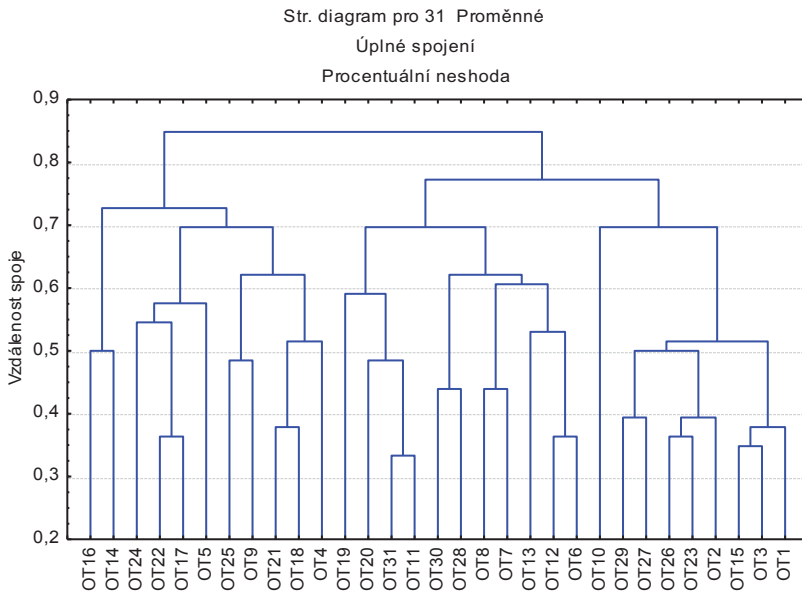
We were interested in the extent to which students are able to identify elementary skills and competences presented as activities. We compared responses with theoretical discourse in the professional literature and we categorized similar activities (terms – statements clustering).

The list of social pedagogue's competences (Bakošová, 2005, Chudý, 2008) was used for basic comparison and definition of cluster categories. We ended up with three basic categories – clusters (analysed in the 0,7 line distance). Those were defined as follows:

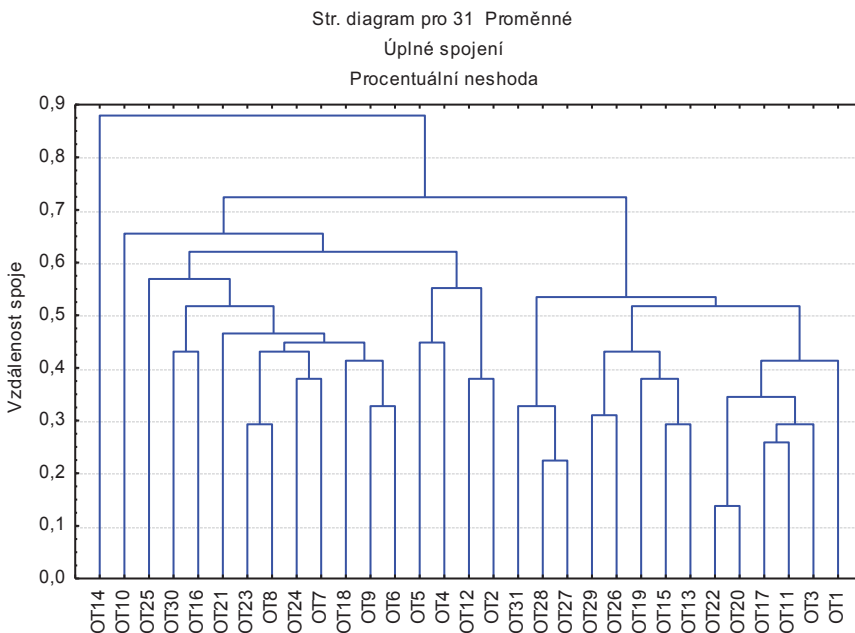
- Communication – communication skills – negotiation, the art to refuse inadequate demands, situations interpretation, situational behaviour etc.
- Work organization and assistance – time schedule compliance, organizing agenda activities, dealing with difficult client's situation, offering services etc.
- Active approach to client's situation – to handle situations well, to listen to others, to engage a client in the solution etc.

One very interesting finding from the subtest is that students evaluate positively the development of skills and competences in communication, group organization and client or group work, mediation and probation. Categories such as category concerning relationship formation and its use for a person providing assistance or category on research activities and methodology creation remained separate from the others. (chart no. 1 and 2).

Picture 1. Complete linkage of clusters of years 1

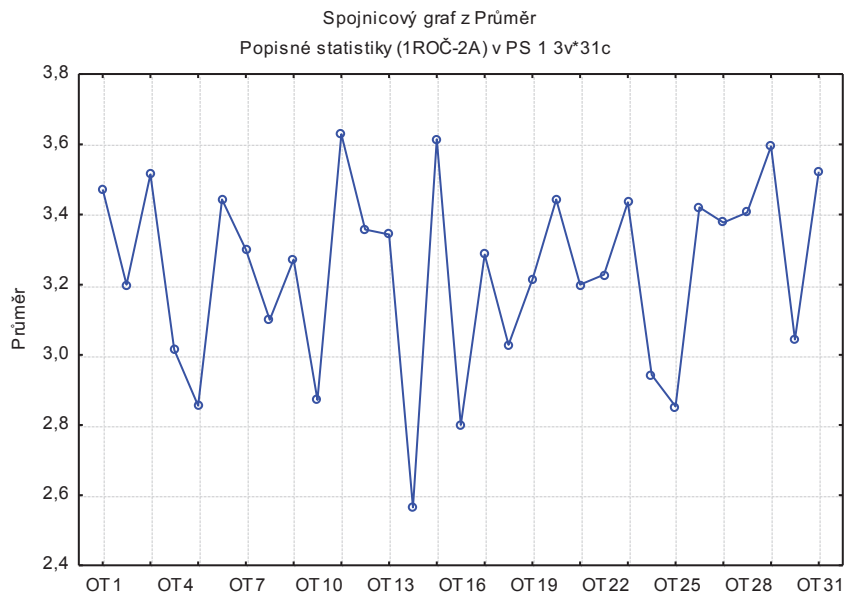


Picture 2. Complete linkage of clusters - year 3

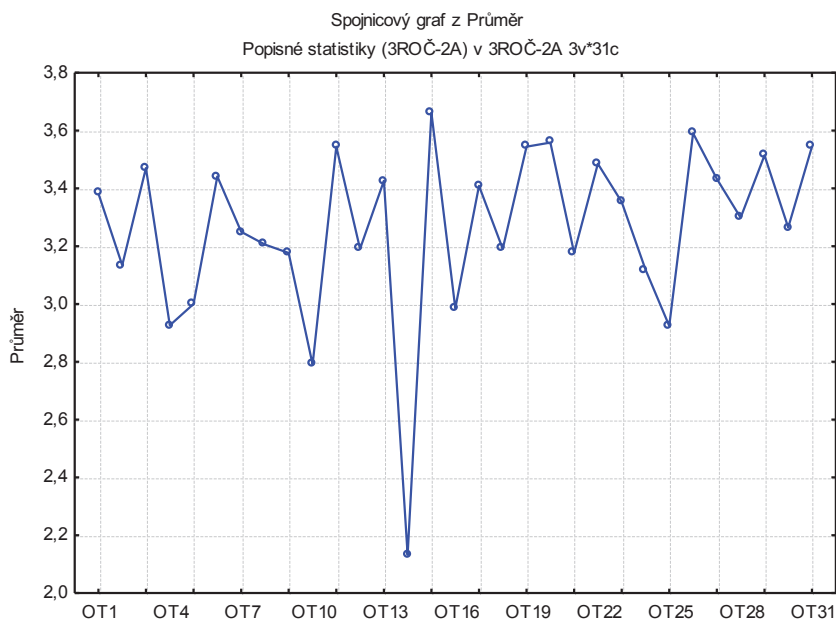


The data analysis was also used to compare minimum and maximum means, to make statistical variance analysis, to analyse standard deviation of responses from the average response (Appendix no. 2 and 3). There is little apparent discrepancy in responses of individual respondents in many questions. However, the most apparent discrepancy is featured with the questions on research and research activities. The explanation might be that the question was not asked clearly enough and many students somehow associated research, research activities and methodology creation with thesis creation and the course on pedagogy research methodology and with statistics and its use in pedagogy (the names of the courses may differ at colleges) (Fig. 1 and 2 reflect the descriptive statistics of responses means).

Picture 3. Line chart showing the mean of responses – Year 1



Picture 4. Line chart showing the mean of responses – 3rd



5. Change the study subject or change the access to study?

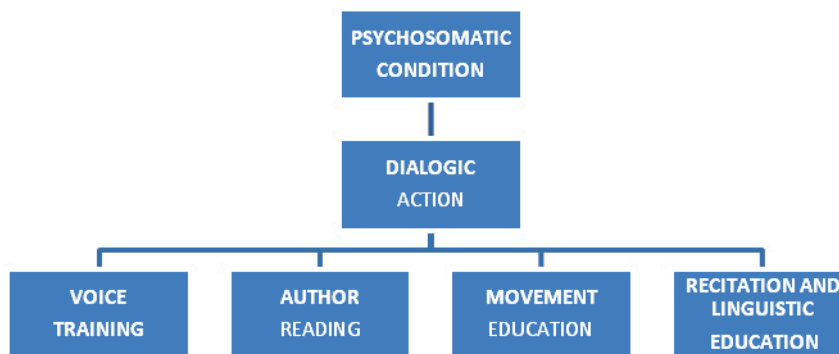
In this part we would like to outline the aspect of the education of social pedagogy students that involves personality cultivation including its social dimension. This education is achieved through psychosomatic

(nonmaterial) disciplines. Finally we offer a comparison of two approaches, namely socially psychological training as it is common practice and psychosomatic preparation.

5.1 Psychosomatic disciplines

The term psychosomatics is known especially as a medical term when doctors talk about psychosomatics thus emphasizing the influence that the patient's mind has over his or her physical health. The conception of psychosomatic approach as we understand it is the way that a person evaluates his or her existence as a physical and psychical unity. Any discipline that takes only one of the two factors to practise it as a sort of an instrument for a purpose is not considered to be psychosomatic. Psychosomatic discipline is therefore recitation and linguistic education, it is dialogic action with the inner partner, as well as voice training, movement education and author writing and reading (Hančil, 2005). The supporting pillar of this conception is dialogic action with the inner partner. These disciplines develop psychosomatic condition.

Picture 5 The relation between psychosomatic disciplines



5.2 A comparison of socially psychological training and psychosomatic disciplines

One of the requirements that an individual is expected to do during this preparation is keeping a self-reflection diary. These reports usually take the form of personal accounts or commentary on current state, on the way the participant experiences the lessons of the psychosomatic preparation, what new things he or she learns and realizes, and what new potentials of his or her development the participant sees.

The aim of these reports is i.a. the development of the ability to ask and answer questions relating one self, other people, events and activities.

These self-reflective reports are a prerequisite of all psychosomatic disciplines. Self-reflection is a part of cognition and learning, it is the basis of self-regulation of the participant's activities. Self-reflection that is written down is the "memory" of the participant's experiences, feelings and what he or she deduces from this knowledge. However, it is not only self emergence, not only introspection, but it is also a view of the future, it means the awareness of how I am able to work at my might or condition.

In the following table we will try to compare two approaches – namely the common socially psychological training and psychosomatic disciplines. The given categories come from the content analysis of students' self-reflection diaries that they kept during the whole time of preparation.

Table 3. A comparison of socially psychological training and psychosomatic disciplines

Category	Socially psychological training	Psychosomatic disciplines
Rules	They are given in advance, which keeps the person within close bounds, it restricts the student to the things that are focused on. The person is thus lead through the training rather than finding one's own way.	Almost none. The person thus gets almost infinite space for searching one's own topic. Important factors are personal maturity and experience. It also takes a lot of time and internal motivation from the students.
Communication	Frequent group or pair work, therefore the necessity to communicate with other members of the group. This has been aimed at since the pre-school age and it is surely important, however, it is nothing innovative.	The emphasis is put on discovering communication with one's own self (one's inner partner/partners), which can understood as a new dimension. This confirms the presumption that we often cannot be one's own partner. Now the students are wanted to search for the meaning of the utterance, slow down, take notice of the somatic tension, which is often new and difficult.
Self-knowledge	Considering the self-knowledge activities the students reflect that they do not learn anything new about themselves.	The students claim that in the situations of "searching the inner partner" they naturally and better learn about themselves. They are well aware that they cannot help other people unless they know themselves sufficiently.
Responsibility	As for feelings, the students reflect more relaxation, but also less responsibility = less effort. The students do not feel responsible for their solutions because they sense the unreality of the situation. They react to the artificially created situation by an artificially created reaction for which they do not bear so much responsibility. They are just having a good time.	The fact that "I have to rely on myself only" tends to create more nervousness and tension, but at the same time it produces more responsibility for one's behaviour. Author reading makes the students realize more responsibility for the communicated content, they want to argue what they wrote and then read. By reading their text they want to attract attention of the others, they take care of its interpretation.
Creativity Relates to Rules	The studenti reflect that they do not have to invent anything new, unless they want to, so they simply follow the instructions. They understand the instructions as a sort of boundaries.	The situations themselves which are not limited by the instructions, make the students act spontaneously and feed back creatively. The awareness of the emphasis on now and here parallels the work of social pedagogue and helping professions in general. The confirmation of the fact that if the person does not have precise instructions for the activities undertaken, then one has to act creatively.

We are aware that the results shown here cannot be generalized. What is essential for us is the knowledge of the fact that both approaches have their place and reason and they can supplement each other. Yet, it would be interesting to determine whether the typology of the student's or participant's personality has any influence on the preference of the one or the other of the given approaches. And if, or how much, this choice is influenced by personal maturity and life experience.

If we are to prepare social pedagogues who should be able to help their clients, then it is necessary to prepare not only erudite experts but also strong personalities that have a partner relationship with themselves, since a mature personality is capable of creating relationships, which we consider to be one of the key competences not merely within the scope of social pedagogy studies.

6. Conclusion – Reflection on further problem solving

Observing the second subtest outcome, there are a few questions we would like to ask to provoke discussion on the curriculum of social pedagogy programmes. It shows that it is inevitable to deal with social pedagogy research activities as an academic discipline - and not only when designing fields of study and their curriculum but also consider its philosophy at the college. The output of the above mentioned attributes are also future work prospects of social pedagogues based on their specialization and profile. The profile aspects are also listed in a working positions catalogue issued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic.

The thematic concept of social pedagogy compared with other pedagogical disciplines is adequate but we can observe the gradual merger of social work and social pedagogy disciplines. We understand this process as the reflection of the state of the Czech Republic legislation (in contrast to Slovak Republic where Act no. 245/2008 Z.z. clearly specifies work prospects and competences of graduates) and future prospects of graduates in a certain line of work. These are the possible topics for discussion (if you would like to learn more or if you wish to cooperate on the project, please contact the first author of the paper) and ideas for further research.

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