

## **Working together in the helping professions**

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### **I. Introduction**

Helping professions are all those professions in which the aim is to help others, in order to achieve personal or social improvement, in a supportive and altruistic manner. Some of the helping professions are: teacher, psychologist, nurse, policeman, social educator, pedagogue, social integrator, social worker ... All these professions have in common that they are vocational, as you need to possess certain qualities and skills that help you to develop in your workplace. Such as empathy, patience, kindness, problem-solving skills, honesty, loyalty, creativity, optimism...

The helping professions play a central role in the dynamics of social life and throughout recent history have been valued and socially recognised for the contribution they make to society by contributing to its well-being and development.

It is therefore important to reflect on the transcendence of the teaching-learning processes that take place in university classrooms, where, from a vision of integral education, men and women are trained who in the near future, with the knowledge acquired, the development of their skills and the internalisation of certain principles and values, will serve the social group in which they are inserted.

### **II. Theoretical Part**

#### **2.1 Concept of multidisciplinary, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity**

As defined by the national library of medicine *Multidisciplinary draws on knowledge from different disciplines but stays within their boundaries. Interdisciplinarity analyzes, synthesizes and harmonizes links between disciplines into a coordinated and coherent whole. Transdisciplinarity integrates the natural, social and health sciences in a humanities context, and transcends their traditional boundaries. The objectives of multiple disciplinary approaches are to resolve real world or complex problems, to provide different perspectives on problems, to create comprehensive research questions, to develop consensus clinical definitions and guidelines, and to provide comprehensive health services. Multiple disciplinary teamwork has both benefits and drawbacks.*

The three terms refer to the involvement of multiple disciplines to varying degrees on the same continuum.. With their own specific meanings, these terms should not be used interchangeably. The more general term "multiple disciplinary" is suggested for when the nature of involvement of multiple disciplines is unknown or unspecified. While multiple disciplinary teamwork is appropriate for complex problems, it is not always necessary in every single project.

For example, when a person is cared for by experts from different areas, who work together to carry out diagnoses and tests. These experts, such as social workers, pedagogues, psychologists, educators... collaborate with each other, although each one contributes their own vision from their speciality. In this way, it is when we could say that there is a multidisciplinary care and monitoring of the individual working cooperatively.

On the contrary, to understand when professionals do not work in a cooperative way, it is as if a box were to go through an automatic conveyor belt along which one worker puts the contents in, another closes it, another puts the label on, and the last one takes it to the market. None of them must collaborate directly with the others, but do their task individually and in isolation.

### **III. Helping Professions**

#### **3.1. SOCIAL EDUCATOR**

Social educators help, support and protect people who are vulnerable or at risk. They intervene and mediate in different environments, accompanying people to improve their reality.

**Their main functions are:**

- Establish a relationship of trust with the user. The social educator becomes familiar with the user's problems, assessing their needs and then providing them with help or putting them in contact with the corresponding services.
- Helping those in need of home care, such as children of all ages, adults with physical disabilities, learning difficulties or mental health problems, and elderly people.
- Accompanying users in carrying out administrative procedures such as applying for social security benefits, preparing budgets, obtaining legal advice, contacting council housing departments, etc.

**PROFESSIONAL PROFILE**

To be a social educator, you need to:

- Listen attentively and empathise when necessary.
- Know how to gain people's trust.
- Be flexible and adaptable.
- Assess needs and circumstances.
- Communicate clearly, both verbally and in writing.
- Collect and analyse information and understand it.
- Be observant, interpret situations and identify problems.
- Dealing tactfully with conflicts and finding effective solutions.

**COMPETENCIES**

- Listening skills.
- Ability to gain the trust of others.
- Ability to take into account and understand how others feel.
- Ability to work in a team.
- Ability to identify problems and interpret situations.

**3.2 SOCIAL WORKER**

The Social Work profession promotes social change, the resolution of problems in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to increase well-being.

Its mission is to facilitate all people to develop their full potential, enrich their lives and prevent dysfunction. Professional social work is focused on problem solving and change. As such, social workers are agents of change in society and in the lives of the individuals, families and communities for whom they work.

More specifically, in the field of education, School Social Work is fundamental to improve the learning possibilities of many students, to reduce the effect of socio-economic inequalities between students, to reduce the risk of failure and school drop-out of the most disadvantaged students, to improve the quality of life of the most disadvantaged students, to improve the quality of life of the most disadvantaged students and to reduce the risk of school drop-out.

Definition of Social Work, adopted by the Assembly of the International Federation of Social Workers, Montreal, Canada, July 2000. *Social work is a profession for those who have a strong desire to help improve people's lives. Social workers help people function as well as possible in their environment, deal with their relationships and solve personal and family problems.*

**The most important functions of the professions in Social Work are the following:**

- PREVENTIVE FUNCTION: early action on the causes that generate individual and collective problems, derived from human relations and the social environment.
- DIRECT ATTENTION FUNCTION: responds to the attention of individuals or groups that present, or are at risk of presenting, problems of a social nature.
- MEDIATION FUNCTION: in the mediation function, the social worker/social worker acts as a catalyst, enabling the union of the parties involved in the conflict with the aim of making it possible, through his/her intervention, for the interested parties themselves to achieve the resolution of the conflict.

- **EVALUATION FUNCTION:** to contrast the results obtained in the different actions, in relation to the proposed objectives, taking into account the techniques, means and time used.

On the other hand, in Spain, the studies that qualify you to be a Social Worker are 4 years of University, so that the graduate in Social Work will be able to create and develop models of prevention and intervention of a social nature, prior to the analysis of the socio-economic and cultural context and the impact it has on different population groups.

### **3.3 SPECIAL PEDAGOGUE**

Therapeutic pedagogy refers to the Special Education Teacher who works with students with special educational needs in different areas, depending on the needs of the student and the educational response required.

The character of a teacher with this speciality is that of being socially impulsive and empathetic with people who suffer from some difficulty, as well as facing a learning process that focuses on the pupil and his or her difficulties. It is to aspects such as these that Special Education tries to respond and achieve in each small step that society takes through a correct intervention with these pupils and their families.

**Basically, the functions performed by a PT are as follows:**

- To attend to and give support to pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN).
- To elaborate together with the teachers or professors the didactic material adapted for SEN pupils.
- Elaborate together with the teachers the Individualised Curricular Adaptations (ICA).
- Coordinate periodically with the teachers of each area, as well as tutors.
- To meet with the families of NESE students.

### **3.4 PSYCHOLOGIST**

The educational psychologist is the psychology professional whose mission is the study and intervention on human behaviour in the context of education. The field of study and action of the educational psychologist is related to the cognitive processes associated with or derived from learning. Its ultimate goal is the development of the capacities of individuals, groups and institutions. Furthermore, in the definition, the term educational is understood in the broadest sense of training, that which makes personal and collective development possible.

It is common to confuse the educational psychologist with other professionals: we are talking about pedagogues, counsellors or clinical child psychologists. In this sense, the educational psychologist is in charge of the study of education and educational models. The role of counsellors is to guide people throughout their academic and professional life. And clinical child psychologists aim to treat mental disorders that appear in childhood. Although they are very different professions, it is necessary for them to work together to achieve quality education.

Below are the functions of the educational psychologist according to the General Council of Psychologists of Spain:

- 3.4.1 **INTERVENTION IN THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF PUPILS:** it must be responsible for studying and anticipating the educational needs of pupils. Thanks to this, it can act on them to improve their educational experience.
- 3.4.2 **FUNCTIONS LINKED TO GUIDANCE, PROFESSIONAL AND VOCATIONAL ADVICE:** the general objective of these processes is to collaborate in the development of people's competences. Through the clarification of their personal, vocational and professional projects so that they can direct their own training and decision-making.
- 3.4.3 **PREVENTIVE FUNCTIONS:** it must intervene in the application of the necessary measures to avoid possible problems in the educational experience. It is important to act on all educational agents (parents, teachers, children, counsellors...).
- 3.4.4 **INTERVENTION IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE EDUCATIONAL ACT:** it is of great importance to pay attention to the instruction applied by educators. Studying and applying the best educational techniques is necessary for optimal learning and development of the pupil.
- 3.4.5 **FAMILY TRAINING AND COUNSELLING:** An important part of education is provided by the family. Through the study of the family and subsequent counselling, we achieve efficient family educational models. And with this we increase the quality of life of all members of the family.
- 3.4.6 **SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION:** academic and family life are not the only ones that

educate the human being, the whole environment does. It is the responsibility of the educational psychologist to study how the current social system influences education. And thus try to intervene in those aspects that can be improved.

### **3.5. COUNSELLOR**

It is a fundamental piece within the current educational system because its role within the institution is to detect any educational problems, advise teachers and students' families in order to create a significant academic development in students.

Therefore, we can define the educational counsellor as a professional who accompanies students to make well-considered and realistic decisions about their education and training; furthermore, according to the profile of the educational counsellor, he/she is a specialised professional with knowledge in various branches of science, which allows him/her to carry out his/her work in the best possible way.

In this sense, when a learning difficulty or problem is detected in a student, the counsellor is in charge of carrying out different psycho-technical tests and interviewing the family, in order to draw up a psycho-pedagogical report, in which the problem is analysed in depth, with the aim of determining the need for resources.

It should be noted that the educational guide has a higher education in pedagogy or psychology, which favours teaching thanks to the support and advice given to both pupils and teachers. In addition, this professional is in charge of applying team study methods, collaborating in individual support and guidance programmes, among other things.

### **FUNCTIONS**

- Identify the educational needs of the student in order to make him/her aware of his/her academic reality.
- To advise both the pupil and the teaching staff and even the families.
- To provide psycho-pedagogical advice to the teaching staff.
- To collaborate in the process of research, innovation and experimentation that an educational institution sets in motion.

## **IV. Work As A Team**

A work team consists of a group of people working together, who share perceptions, have a common proposal, agree on work procedures, cooperate with each other, accept a compromise, resolve their disagreements in open discussions; this does not appear automatically, but must be built up little by little. The collaboration of teamwork, and with it the cohesion of the group, creates an atmosphere conducive to work, in which the members feel comfortable, are motivated, enthusiastic and feel part of the group and important within it.

Some of the reasons why teamwork is necessary:

1. It creates synergy. The most significant impact of a team is in the fact that more can be achieved together than individually.
2. It empowers each member by removing obstacles that may prevent them from doing their tasks properly.
3. It promotes more flexible working structures with less hierarchy.
4. It encourages multidisciplinary work, especially where there are organisational divisions.
5. It encourages accountability and responsiveness to change.
6. Promotes a sense of achievement, fairness and friendship.

On the other hand, as I have already explained, working as a team and therefore in a multidisciplinary way among all aid professionals is indispensable, in order to achieve a common goal together.

In addition, all the above-mentioned professionals share the human qualities and skills necessary for their professional and work performance.

*For all these reasons, having a good multidisciplinary team is essential to achieve high performance in any project. By leaning on others, we can get each task done faster, go further and have more impact.*

It is a reality that working in a multidisciplinary way is necessary in the helping professions. In addition, I believe that all professionals must have certain qualities and skills necessary for their work, as well as the vocation and enthusiasm to carry it out.

I am becoming aware of all this during my university training as a future educator, since it is no use working individually, but the help is better, more precise and quicker if you work together with the rest of your colleagues and professionals.

Without losing sight of the fact that everyone is a specialist in their own field, but that together they are capable of compiling information and finding the means to obtain an adequate response to a social problem.

In this work, I have focused mainly on professionals who help others, in terms of education, thinking of children and adolescents, but it should not be forgotten that this help is also offered to the whole population, whether they are adults, the elderly or people with disabilities.

In my country, Spain, there are many social aids that are given for social improvement, depending on the circumstances and life cycle.

As quoted by Lukáš Stárek in his article *The Contribution Of Interdisciplinary Cooperation In Helping Professions* "The respect and positive attitude towards other workers from different organizations is the basic component for effective cooperating relation. For establishing team cooperation is crucial that other members accept individual differences, learn to understand, respect others, and build personal relationships with other members of the teams "

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