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ABSTRACTS

Psychotherapy alchemy: Turning discomfort into power

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The aim in this article is to clarify elementary conditions and principles of politically sensitive psychotherapy that enable discomfort, personal or political to be turned into power. It is based on an integrated psycho-political view, emphasizing the importance of wide political forces in the shaping of the individual identity. Therefore, an examination of the power systems, in general and in therapy, is a prerequisite for personal development. Furthermore, the authors of this article believe that an analytic distinction should be kept between the intra-psychic developmental axis and the external one. The author is in favor of incorporating references to the political and cultural contexts of the clients' lives within the therapeutic discourse. This dialectic tension, between the personal and the political, enables a view of the individual as an active agent who has responsibility over her or his life, rather than a victim of circumstances. This is accomplished without neglecting the importance of external forces and leading unwittingly to "blaming the victim".

Keywords: culture, politically sensitive therapy, politics, psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, society

A Dialogue on distress and inclusion: Students working with children and youth at-risk assess the extent to which their needs are met by the M.Ed. program for inclusive education

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In this research we examined the professional needs of teachers and educators working with at-risk children and youth and the extent to which they are met by the M.Ed. program for inclusive education at the Oranim

Academic College of Education. The program specializes in developing the sensitivity, understanding, and skills required for dealing with the special challenges posed by socio-economically disadvantaged students from weak groups in society who are excluded from the normative school framework. This program is novel and unique not only in Israel but also worldwide. In this study we analyzed basic issues relating to the program's relevance to those who train in it.

The participants in the 18 month study were students from the first two classes of the program. The data was collected primarily from questionnaires administered at the beginning and end of the year, observation of faculty and program conclusion meetings, and written material relating to the program. The focus of this paper is on the students' perspective as exemplified in the findings derived from the questionnaires.

The principal findings demonstrate that the teacher-training students encounter difficulties both at the school system level and in the classroom. They believe the program to be essential, emphasizing in particular its significance and contribution in deepening their understanding of the distress experienced by the students and their families and the development of empathic-dialogue skills. At the end of two years of study, they affirm that the way in which they approach the challenges posed to them, the control and clarity with which they understand their role, and their attempts to help their pupils have all been directly impacted.

The main conclusions indicate that educational work with at-risk and excluded youth requires special training that includes emphases other than those customarily stressed in traditional teacher-training programs. Such emphases include a broad and multi-dimensional approach deriving from social, psychological, and educational fields and the cultivation of a wide range of skills. Rather than providing "magical solutions" that many students seek, the program should offer deep insights into the process of investing emotional resources into the art of teaching a process designed to develop feelings of competence, responsibility, and a realistic assessment of the capacity to influence reality.

We discuss proposals for further research for evaluating specific aspects of the program, including practicum and written theses. We recommend that in addition to the effect on teaching-students' personal perspective, the influence on their socio-political outlook should also be examined.

Keywords: student at risk, teachers training , teacher professionalization, social exclusion, inclusive education, school changes, school effectiveness, school improvements, teachers'burnout, psychosocial approach in education

The meaning of group music therapy among teenage girls uprooted from Gush-Katif

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In this study we examined a music therapy process which was conducted with a group of six religious teenage girls in Israel. These girls were uprooted from Gush Katif in 2005 as a result of the Israeli disengagement from the Gaza Strip. The purpose of the study was to examine the meaning and significance of group music therapy for these girls after they suffered the trauma of being uprooted from their homes. The study consisted of a group of six girls, aged 12–14, who lived in one of the temporary communities set up in southern Israel to house the displaced settlers. The therapeutic process consisted of 12 weekly meetings, each lasting 90 minutes. The research was conducted two years after they were uprooted from their homes.

The research findings are divided into three major categories: **post-trauma**, **loss**, and **methods of coping** with the trauma and loss. Post-trauma was characterized by intrusive phenomenon, avoidance and excessive arousal. Loss was characterized by feelings of bereavement, longing, anger and pain. Methods of coping included physical release, expressing feelings, faith and hope, and group support. The participants went through a process of working through two of the five stages of mourning delineated by Kubler-Ross (2002). The research shows that more symptoms of post-trauma were aroused during the second, unstructured stage of the therapeutic process. In contrast, during the first and third phases of treatment, i.e., the structured stages, post-trauma symptoms were less vigorously expressed.

Keywords: post-trauma, loss, cope, music therapy, group, uprooting

Why not get a Ph.D.? People with learning disabilities tell about their academic success

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Academic achievements are the key to success in the modern world. While people with learning disabilities usually experience difficulties throughout their school years, some are able to succeed in obtaining advanced academic degrees which allow them to achieve personal, financial, social, and professional success. This paper focuses on the factors that enable individuals with learning disabilities to succeed in their academic studies. Data were gathered through ten in-depth interviews with respondents with learning disabilities who obtained academic degrees. The findings indicate that three factors shape the academic path of successful students who have learning disabilities: internal attributes, interaction with the environment, and the policies of the educational system, especially the academic one. The conclusion includes recommendations and modes of intervention that could assist effective coping in each of these areas. It is emphasized that following the legislation of the Right of Students with Learning Disabilities Law in the post-high school institutes, the application of the law will be based on a broad, ethical, and humanistic worldview aimed at providing equal opportunity to all.

Keywords: learning disabilities, academic success, policy towards students with learning disabilities

Active teaching and traditional teaching of mathematics in special education

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This study examined differences between the two teaching methods – active teaching and traditional teaching – for teaching mathematics in special education classes in regular primary education systems in the Arab sector. We examined the differences in promoting student achievement in mathematics both in terms of understanding the study material and in

terms of abilities to solve mathematical questions. We also examined the effect of gender on mathematic achievements in special education.

The hypothesis was that the active teaching method will promote student achievement better than the traditional method because it presents to the students research projects, representation of situations via illustrations and between concepts. Active teaching is a learning process in which emphasis is placed on activating students compared to traditional learning, where the teacher teaches most of the lesson, and the students remain passive (Glovman and Harrison, 1994).

The study involved 40 students who studied four special education classes (grades c-d) in regular elementary education systems (students with learning disabilities). Two classes learned mathematics by means of active teaching, and the other learned through the traditional method. The population of students in each class was tested twice, once at the beginning of the year and once at the end. The achievement level of students was tested by means of a math test. The teachers were asked to complete a questionnaire characterizing the teaching method they used.

The findings indicate that the improvement among students who studied by means of the active teaching method was significantly greater than the improvement in the level of achievement in mathematics among the students who studied via the traditional teaching method. The findings also show that the improvement in the girls' achievement in mathematics was significantly greater than the improvement in the level of achievements among the boys.

One of the pedagogical implications which emerged in this study is that the characterization of teaching as a method of teaching that emphasizes active learning may constitute a factor that assist in promoting student achievement in mathematics, and its implications may have an impact on other teaching professions. Active teaching may result in the prevention of students dropping out of school, the motivation of learning and an improvement in social relations.

Keywords: teaching methods, active teaching, traditional teaching, teaching, mathematics, special education classes, special education system.