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Educational coaching as a good school practice

Abstract

The modern education is a collection of subjects in an asymmetric system of interdependence. Each of them (a teacher, a pupil, a parent) has to deal with the technological, social and geopolitical challenges in the changing reality, in which axiological and psychomotor aspects of the human development ceased to be constant. The article presents the possibilities of the introduce of coaching in the school, the daily practice of teachers and what are the challenges before them this kind of work.

Key words: new teaching process, coaching, education, competition, individualization, mentoring, interpersonal relationship.

*The great artistry is demonstrated by the teacher,
who can cause that creative self-expression
and acquisition of knowledge become the source of joy.*

Albert Einstein

*A teacher is someone, who sees a unique person in each child
and encourages him or her to develop his/her individual talents and strength.*

Barbara Cage

Introduction

The intergenerational transmission of knowledge is becoming less significant and instead of it the new, dynamic and mass sources of knowledge are appearing. Variability in the essentia of things became *differentia specifica* of nowadays. This process is also subject to education, which slowly tries to move away from the traditional, giving model of teaching, built on the paternalistic system. Partly it is caused by the great growth of knowledge. Last century has concentrated more doctrines and theories than all of the earlier periods together. In literature appear the terms like „the era

of knowledge”¹, that show 21st century as a period of the biggest development of multiple competencies with the stress on meeting the needs of future generations in the same time. So how to master science achievements, how to choose something that is worth to be learnt, how to modify, adapt the core curriculum of education and not to overload pupils, teachers and parents? Coaching is not the „medicine” for problems of education, but one of the options – the chance – for solving them.

Coaching is a process that supports a harmonious human development and opens to knowledge. As the „training of effectiveness”² coaching, the work of coach and client, can fast, significantly and permanently improve the effectiveness in personal life and in building the educational and professional career³. „The only coach’s aim is to work on things that help the client with improving his or her potentials – in the ways of the client’s own definitions”⁴. It seems that a similar task stands before modern education. Instead of giving the prepared knowledge that human cannot assimilate as a whole (moreover – within the meaning of lifelong learning – he should broaden and deepen it all the time), the discovering of possibilities, acquisition of competencies and inspiring to self-activity become much more important. These demands are not new, but the change in their direction seems to be inevitable.

Individualization in the process of education

*Only weak person is afraid of the impact,
the individualist cannot be broken.*

Bogumił Białczyński

Individualism was understood by S.I. Witkiewicz as a biological phenomenon. He maintained that „individualized biology would tell more about a person than physics”⁵ and stressed the person’s natural development, conditioned by his personal possibilities, predispositions. In ethics

¹ E. Beyer, Wiedza jako kluczowy zasób w nowej gospodarce, *Studia i Prace Wydziału Nauk Ekonomicznych i Zarządzania*, no 21, p. 7, http://www.wneiz.pl/nauka_wneiz/sip/sip21-2011/SiP-21-1.pdf, access: 02.12.2014.

² The title of book *Coaching, trening efektywności*, and the way of defining the coaching proposed by the father of this method: John Withmore. His works are one of a few recommended by International Coach Federation.

³ J. Roggers, *Coaching*, Wolter Cluwer, Gdańsk 2013, p. 14.

⁴ Ibidem.

⁵ *Popularna Encyklopedia Powszechna*, vol. 7, Kraków 1995, p. 195.

it was shown as a sentence that „all of the moral standards come from the feelings and urges of human beings and the only motive and purpose of the proceedings are self-improvement and the achievement of personal happiness”⁶. This fits in with the approach of Zygmunt Bauman. In his view, the expansion of modernity (including also economic and political systems) gave entities the warranty of deliverance out of the culturally-imposed social framework⁷. Thanks to this deliverance, the dissimilarity – the individual – became something natural, and even obvious.

Individualization in education seems to be the desirable phenomenon. Scientists talk about subjective approach that allows for notice each participant of process of education as a different creature with his/her own “luggage” of possibilities.

As T. Lewowicki notices, individualization can be in each stage of process of education by the appropriate choice of purposes, contents, methods, forms, resources and rules⁸. In mass, large-scale education it is really a great challenge. In that situation coaching appears as the collection of tools that allows for discovering the autogenous characteristics of the entity, thanks to which he/she could distinguish in that system. The coaching tools are used not only to solve the problems or overcome the impasse of development, but also help with building the internal motivation for action, take autonomous decisions and expand the range of possibilities⁹.

There are two approaches to individualism, both in culture and education. „In traditional view it is assumed that Polish society belongs to collectivist culture, in which the basic source of identification is belonging to a strong and stable social networks, and interpersonal relationships are more important than achievement of personal aims”¹⁰. This traditional approach gives way to digital, materialistic and modern society of the third era¹¹.

Coaching is considered a novelty and sometimes is treated as an alternative way for traditional forms of support like consulting or psychotherapy. However, its origins date back to Socratic Maieutic Method which consists

⁶ Ibidem.

⁷ Z. Bauman, *Zindywidualizowane społeczeństwo*, GWP, Gdańsk 2008, p. 59.

⁸ T. Lewowicki, *Indywidualizacja w kształceniu*, [in:] W. Pomykało (ed.), *Encyklopedia pedagogiczna*, Innowacja, Warszawa 1993, pp. 251–256.

⁹ Examples of coaching tools such as the circle of life, life in a day or johari’s window are described, among others, in books: J. Rogers, *Coaching*, op. cit.; M. Bennewicz, *Coaching czyli restauracja osobowości*, Buchmann, Warszawa 2013.

¹⁰ B. Majerek, S. Trusz, Tolerancja niepewności jako element kompetencji społecznych w kulturze indywidualizmu, *Edukacja. Studia, badanie, innowacje*, 2011, no 4(116), p. 66.

¹¹ The concept developed by A. Toffler, in which the development of civilization passed the following stages: the first wave of covering society (civilization) farming is a second wave of industrial society and the third wave of this technological civilization.

of asking questions that discover “pure truth”. This method is based on the conviction that the debater/client has his/her own resources (in the form of unconscious knowledge) necessary for discovery of the knowledge. In Whitmore opinion, the society has lost the knowledge about it for last two centuries, because of its aspirations towards materialistic reductionism¹². Coaching is an attempt to return to harmonious and balanced own resources management of the entity. If a teacher has a coaching attitude¹³, his/her actions will be directed to strengthen the positive behavior, correcting negative behaviors and highlighting the attributes that describe a person on the canvas of the community.

Meta-coaching or mentoring in education

*Go and teach him everything that you know, Mentor:
Odysseus*

A highly difficult task is to name and establish hierarchy of something that allows for calling the teacher “master” or “authority”. Following the thinking of individualism, for each person a valuable feature may be something different, no matter whether it is an ability to build a sense of justice by appropriate use of opinions or being open for dialogue. It is even more difficult nowadays, when there is mass-knowledge and the teacher is no longer its authoritative source. According to that the teacher is perceived as a censor who confines pupils by „requirements for results that they should achieve, and therefore it is harder for them to advance – in their own eyes”¹⁴, or in parents’ or teacher’s eyes. Meanwhile, a mentor, a teacher – who is the mentor, could look at the pupil not in terms of his/her achievements, which often do not correlate with the actual capacity of the student, but through the prism of potential and his/her cognitive abilities. So the teacher/mentor evaluates pupils through pupils’ knowledge and their abilities, not through their deficiencies. „It is a very serious mistake that is present in most of existing evaluation systems”¹⁵. J. Kordziński has similar comments. In his view „school is still being fed mainly by the incompetence of pupils, and the derivative of that is fact, that from teachers

¹² J. Whitmore, *Coaching, trening efektywności*, G+J, Warszawa 2011, p. 17.

¹³ Coaching attitude – expressed through the professional and ethical conduct consistent with the tasks, rules and competencies of existing coach.

¹⁴ J. Whitmore, *Coaching...*, op. cit., p. 20.

¹⁵ Ibidem.

the student gets information mostly about what he/she does not know, and not about what he/she already can and how it can be used in the future”¹⁶.

In Greek Mythology Mentor was a scholar and a crony of Odysseus. When Odysseus went to war with Troy, he entrusted Mentor the care of his own son asking to transmit a young man everything Mentor knew and could do. Appointing Mentor to be a guardian for Telemachus, Odysseus had set the boundaries of modern mentoring. It is therefore responsible process of transmitting the knowledge that is based on teacher’s own experiences and observations. As J. Whitmore notices, mentoring is similar to learning craftsmanship from the older, more experienced master¹⁷.

School as an institution creates in its potential the ideal circumstances to mentoring, because its basic idea is to emergence mentors (teachers) from the whole community, who can transmit knowledge and create conditions for developing the abilities and competencies of their wards – pupils. However, not without significance is a fact of existence of the phenomenon known as the effect of interpersonal expectations (or a result of self-fulfilling prophecy), which is a software component of social constructivism. „As a part of the analysis the regularities has been discovered, from which people can explain and predict behaviors of teachers and pupils in the framework of self-fulfilling prophecy mechanism. Past exploration focused mainly on the relations between expectations of teachers, and students’ achievement in learning process”¹⁸. Therefore, beyond the teaching processes, this effect may also refer to mechanisms of strengthening the positive behaviors and increasing the level of motivation to self-realization and achievement of its objectives. In its function it is similar of good cheering of faithful fans.

The rules of educational coaching

*The main purpose of the education is not the learning,
but the awakening of the spirit.*

Ernest Renan

Coaching is based on the six rules¹⁹, which were elaborated by some of the best world class coaches some years ago. They were crystallized

¹⁶ J. Kordziński, *Nauczyciel. Trener. Coach*, Wolter Cluwer, Warszawa 2013, p. 10.

¹⁷ J. Whitmore, *Coaching...*, op. cit., p. 21.

¹⁸ S. Trusz, *Efekt oczekiwań interpersonalnych w edukacji*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Pedagogicznego, Kraków 2010, p. 11.

¹⁹ These principles are described in her book. Jenny Rogers – one of the most famous coaches in the world, practicing for 20 years. It deals with a description of best practices

from the experiences, long practice in that occupation and they contain primary ideological assumptions of coaching. These rules can be also easily referred to the school practice, because both, coaching and school, are signed by development needs, intra- and interpersonal needs, and in the consequences these rules are achieved by social competencies of entities involved in the process. The rules including the assumptions of coaching, worked out by ICF²⁰ are:

The client is the source of resources;

1. By asking appropriate questions, giving challenges and supporting, the coach makes the client start using his/her own resources;
2. Coaching refers to the whole person – with his/her past, present and future;
3. The client chooses the issue;
4. The coach and the client are equal;
5. The purpose of coaching is a change and an action.

Each of the above rules is a part of the everyday school practice in following ways:

1. The client is the source of resources – this rule is expressed in the attitude of the coach/teacher based on the belief that client/pupil has all the resources, through which he/she is able to solve the issues bothering him/her²¹. a student who is inspired and motivated is able to take self-exploration of selected themes and develop his/her interests.
2. By asking appropriate questions, giving challenges and supporting, the coach makes the client start using his/her own resources – a teacher, leading the process of coaching, has to remember the rules of effective communication and know the art of asking questions. Active listening is one of the main teaching skills, included in social communication competencies. Active listening means the knowledge of techniques as paraphrase, reflect, classification²². Questions should be easy, not complicated and complex. They should be also open,

and experience in this profession. As a longtime manager specializing in business coaching, her publications are recommended by the ICF.

²⁰ ICF – International Coach Federation – coaching worldwide organization for professional coaches environment. ICF was founded in 1995, currently has more than 25 000 members in more than 100 countries. ICF is a nonprofit organization that co-creates a person leading individual coaching practice. ICF activities are devoted to developing the coaching profession by defining competencies and ethical standards, providing independent the structure of accreditation for coaches and coaching schools and building forum for the exchange of experiences; <http://www.icf.org.pl/>, accessed: 01.12.2014.

²¹ J. Rogers, *Coaching*, op. cit., p. 14.

²² K. Bargiel-Matusiewicz, *Zasady komunikacji interpersonalnej*, [in:] K. Bargiel-Matusiewicz, *Negocjacje i mediacje*, Warszawa 2010, pp. 5–10.

because then they give the opportunity to the full speech and open for deeper knowledge. Questions in caching should be „discovering”, that means they should reach the heart of the matter, discover new qualities, values and prioritize them.

3. Coaching refers to the whole person (with his/her past, present and future) – although coaching is not a therapy, a coach²³ or a teacher should remember that each person/pupil is a unique collection of experiences with his/her story, personal and family life and with his/her plans for the future and dreams. Sometimes it happens that the behavior is assessed only through the prism of the situation in which it had occurred, without including the broader context (e.g. situation at home, financial condition, disease, dysfunction).
4. The client chooses the issue – in this rule we can see the biggest discrepancy between traditional coaching and teaching²⁴. It is difficult to imagine the situation, when the pupil himself/herself chooses the issue of conversation with the teacher. However, it is worth mentioning that educational coaching will not copy the life-coaching or business-coaching rules in each of their aspects. It is adapted to the pupil’s needs and (what is the most important) it is concentrated on autonomous operations of learning by client of coaching²⁵. It also draws attention to the fact that learning is the intention of teaching, and it is something what A.T. Pearson was writing about. „If our task is to determine, whether an operation is the operation of teaching or not – in contrast to the other kind of operations, such as declamation, speaking, or playing in the arts – so that the desire to induce learning is essential to distinguish teaching from other activities”²⁶. Therefore, on the one hand the topic of educational coaching is forced by the school situation, and on the other hand – the teacher should give space to the initiative of the pupil.
5. The coach and the client are equal – at school it is realized as reciprocal acceptance of both subjects. The teacher accepts the pupil with all of his/her „good and bad achievements”, and the pupil accepts the teacher as a partner in the dialogue. Coaching is unconstrained process, that is why no one can „force” the pupil to participate in it.

²³ Here: Polish equivalent of translating words “coach”, although it is often used by its ambiguity.

²⁴ J. Rogers, *Coaching*, op. cit., p. 15.

²⁵ Coache – term used in relation to customers; here: also students.

²⁶ A.T. Pearson, *Nauczyciel. Teoria i praktyka w kształceniu nauczycieli*, WSiP, Warszawa 1994, p. 76.

The pupil should always be informed about what coaching is and why he/she was offered the participation in that process. It is difficult for teacher to remember about the rule of equality, because his/her role is often associated with the authority, power, the structure of asymmetric dependences, in which the teacher evaluates, asks questions, gives tasks and knows better. For teacher it may be more difficult to dispense with giving instructions and advising than learn coaching²⁷.

6. The purpose of coaching is a change and an action – as it was written earlier, the constitutive feature of modernity is change. The change could not be achieved without taking some concrete decisions, establishing a clear and measurable objective. This also applies to individual situation, when the teacher wants to motivate the pupil to taking actions that lead to change (e.g. raising degrees in chemistry). The change is realized by dual purposes building. *Primo facie* „the coach’s purpose is building awareness, responsibility and self-confidence”²⁸. What is more, Whitmore adds that „building someone’s self-esteem requires getting rid of willingness to control the person or strengthening his/her faith in our outstanding capability”²⁹. Another task for the coach is to care about the objectives of the client/pupil. He/she should help with clarifying following things: turnaround time with minor steps, measurable effect (after which coache [pupil] will recognize that the objective has been reached), he/she should also know whether the aspiration is real and ambitious enough. At the other extreme is a pupil with his/her own goal. He/she should lead to the intra-psychological, fully conscious changes.

Each of those rules should be realized in the coaching process, regarding to its model relationships between who the client is (what are his/her values, beliefs, judgments, needs) and what he/she does (career, roles, tasks, abilities, educational situation, financial situation). The drawing below shows the appropriate area of coaching, and thereby the zones for learning and development.

Educational coaching, like other its kinds, should be realized on the initiative and needs of the client/student. It is the answer for the need of change. It may, however, result from internal factors (such as personal development), but also can be caused by external determinants³⁰ (superior pressure, parental criticism, danger of not being classified). a problematic

²⁷ J. Whitmore, *Coaching...*, op. cit., p. 17.

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 26.

²⁹ Ibidem.

³⁰ J. Rogers, *Coaching*, op. cit., p. 16.

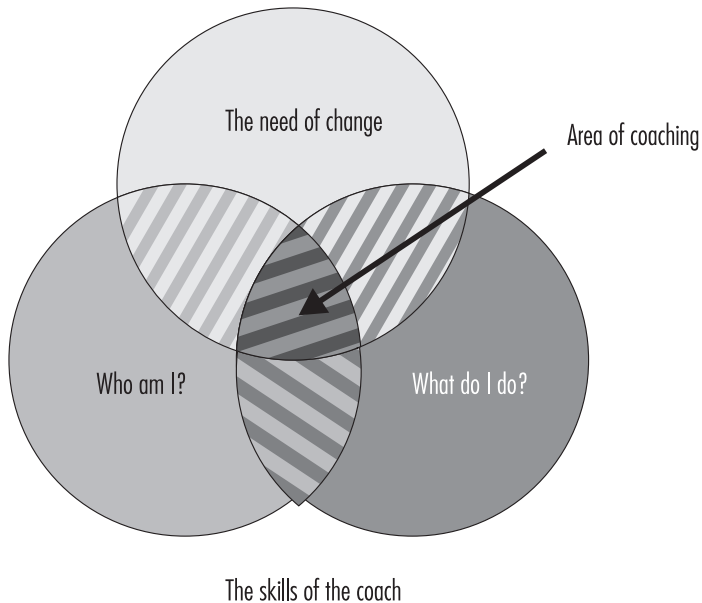


Fig. 1. Coaching models

Source: J. Rogers, *Coaching*, op. cit., p. 16

situation that requires special care and vigilance of the coach is the one where the coachee (student) is internally torn between who he/she is/wants to be and what he/she does. The teacher leading the process of coaching would be responsible for discovery before the client of these *de facto* and deciding with the client who the client is, what he/she does and what are his/her aspirations.

Education as a coaching value – coaching learning

*People learn in 25 per cent from the master,
in 25 per cent by listening themselves,
in 25 per cent from friends,
and in 25 per cent they are taught by time.*

Paulo Coelho

Learning is a complex process which we are subject to (more or less consciously) throughout our life. School plays a major role in adapting people to this continuing operations. Vitally important is knowledge about how important is this school's role and about the impact of experiences from this period of time for the following shaping the careers of graduates,

career management and use of a self-creative competence needed in the labor market. „This is confirmed by the results of studies that say that more than 80% of children starting to learn in school, positively evaluates their own ability to learn. After „the school course” this percentage is drastically changed and as a result 80% of adolescents and adults believe that learning is something difficult, and feel that it is beyond their capabilities”³¹. How then not to lose the creative potential, engagement and motivation, which a child comes to school with?

Leading the discussion of the use of coaching in the educational process we should first consider the mechanisms of learning that may be relevant during training of effectiveness. As it was mentioned earlier, the intention of teaching is to provoke learning. Having regard to anthropological development of human being, learning was used to survive. Man learned how to use items and tools made by his ancestors and tribesmen. And he learned manufacturing techniques, and then he created his own creations (not only connected with farm, but also with art and culture). Learning is conditioned anthropologically, but it is at the polarity: consciously and unconsciously. In psychology learning is defined as „a process of permanently modifying of the individual’s behavior as a result of his/her previous experiences”³². As an element of didactics, in W. Okoń’s view, „learning is a process in the course of which basically on experiences, knowledge and practice, new forms of behaviors and actions are created or previously acquired forms are changed”³³.

Coaching is a process, which gives the space for learning by experience and projection of new, creative solutions. Because of the fact, that a student generates conclusions himself/herself (with a little help of the coach – teacher only), learning and memorizing runs much more faster than in traditional model of education. Most teachers forget, however, about the fact, that teaching should lead to the positive change in behavior and stop at transferring information which student has to remember. Without the internalization of learning it is very difficult or even impossible to achieve the positive overestimation, especially that it is a process that occurs in the nervous system³⁴, and in which new logical links are created.

³¹ J. Kordziński, *Nauczyciel...*, op. cit., p. 10.

³² A. Trzcieniecka-Green, Podstawowe pojęcia psychologiczne, procesy poznawcze (spostrzeganie, uwaga, pamięć, myślenie, inteligencja). Emocje i motywacja, [in:] A. Trzcieniecka-Green, *Psychologia. Podręcznik dla studentów kierunków medycznych*, Universitas, Kraków 2012, p. 41.

³³ W. Okoń, *Wprowadzenie do dydaktyki ogólnej*, PWN, Warszawa 1987, p. 56.

³⁴ After: F. Bereźnicki, *Podstawy dydaktyki*, Impuls, Kraków 2011, p. 21.

Motivation and the education synergy effect

Every person had at least once a decision that he/she had successfully met and at least one that he/she gave up explaining it with the low level of motivation. So what causes our ability to engage in actions or activities?

Motivations are very often identified with feeling of sense of actions. It is similar, when the situation is connected with education and self-education. People learn things faster and more willingly if they feel the sense of them. Related to this is the belief about making a good investment, for example connected with time. Motivation is also being active and engaged in the project. It is confirmed by the methods of activating, constantly improved and developed by teachers.

With this small guide we could find that stimulating and motivating „are based on two its kinds: internal motivation or external motivation”³⁵. External motivation is similar to cheering, „patting on the shoulder”, and consist of organizing the student’s environment in the way that promotes his/her development, creating good learning situations, discoveries and the presence of coaching³⁶. „Internal motivation stimulates specific activity by our system of needs and values”³⁷. Thanks to this internal “cheer” the client maintains engagement, confirms his chosen path of realization of the purpose and focuses on the effect that would be reached. External motivation is an additional, helpful impulse, that supports internal beliefs. It gives the feeling that coache (student) is not alone with his/her problem, and can rely on the support. It is something that reminds about goals in the moments of doubts.

Motivation is composed of chronologically successive elements:

- stimulation of energy;
- orientation of the efforts on a specific purpose;
- selective attention in relation to relevant impulses;
- creation of the sequence of individual positive reactions;
- consistent realization of the evolving activities/tasks up to achieve the goal.

Coach, like a teacher, realizes tasks that derive from the three basic functions of school: education, upbringing and care. Reinforcing these pillars with the motivation and cooperation with the student’s environment, it is possible to create the educational synergy effect. Despite the increase

³⁵ J. Kordziński, *Nauczyciel...*, op. cit., p. 125.

³⁶ It is an attitude expressed in the process of care for the good of the customer, as well as supporting him in the difficult or breakthrough moments.

³⁷ J. Kordziński, *Nauczyciel...*, op. cit., p. 125.

of individualization (which was considered already at the beginning of the article) resulting from the expansion of modernity, increasingly raised is the problem of low social skills and human capital. Motivation is one of the factors that support their development. Social competence proves to be a valuable resource for the labor market, expected by employers. Among others, the amount of subsidies aimed at their development throughout the European Union proves their importance. The main zone of development of social competence is education, as a place of meeting of many people, the agora of exchange of experiences and information and the arena of struggle, where the acquired skills are tested and verified.

High levels of accumulation of people in one place, returning positive experiences and good practices help to build these competencies. Moreover, if this interpersonal transmission is done in a well-organized place, with the area for self-activity and spontaneity, it is possible to cause the synergy effect.

Synergy³⁸ is not an abstract creation, but the real phenomenon noticed by sociologists, cognitive psychologists and educators and also by HR-employees, economists and management. It is a situation, in which with joining many factors or resources (e.g. people in team) the benefits, both tangible and intangible multiply. In education the synergy effect can be caused with the integration of students and other subjects, starting from extracting and calling the strengths, defining goals and awareness of recessive resources that could ‘boycott’ work efficiency and learning.

Aiming to the synergy effect in education coach/teacher always has to remember that the student is capable and ready to take up educational challenges, and needs only the support, motivation and self-confidence. Even if he/she seemingly takes wrong decisions and actions, you should remind him that “tomorrow is fresh and free from mistakes”³⁹.

Recapitulation:

1. Coaching can be understood as a process supporting the harmonious development of the entity and allowing for raising his/her effectiveness in actions.
2. The modernity is not the constant state, but it is signed by a large variation in the areas of social, technological, economic, political and

³⁸ M.E.P. Seligmann, *Optymizmu można się nauczyć. Jak zmienić swoje myślenie i swoje życie*, Media Rodzina, Poznań 2010.

³⁹ The whole piece: “Remember that everything can start again. Tomorrow is always fresh and free of errors”. L.M. Montgomery’s statement of the main character of the novel, entitled: *Anne of Green Gables*.

- ecological. These changes have high importance for the functioning of education.
3. Changing reality compels all subjects in education to move away from traditional teaching. One of the reasons is the high generativeness of knowledge that cannot be assimilated in its entirety. Knowledge of the past two centuries are more abundant in the content than previous eras resources together.
 4. Modern times are characterized by individualism, which is reflected in the separate action and achieving objectives by people.
 5. Coaching rules recommended by the ICF should also be implemented to educational coaching. This requires the reinterpretation and adaptation to school conditions.
 6. Learning is a complex, intentional process, which aim is to permanently modify the behavior of the individual.
 7. Learning is a key element of coaching, but the entire responsibility for the outcome should be taken by the client of coaching.
 8. Motivation is a state of involvement in the action supported by arguments of meaningfulness and the significance of the ongoing undertaking.
 9. Motivation is an important factor for coaching process of learning.

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