



Cooperation between hospital teachers and home school teachers using the Marte Meo Technique

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The background for my work with home school teachers

I am a hospital teacher in a psychiatric consultation for Children and Youth, called BUP, in Sweden. The following is a common problem for school staff that asks for consultation.

Teachers complain about students having disturbing behavior at school, feeling that these students don't want to work and that they are lazy. That might be true for some children who have reached the age where they find other friends they want to be with and other activities they want to do. But some children not only disturb the lessons at school, they have problems in the playground as well. The other children refuse to let them join in their play because they know that these children will even destroy their games as well as the lessons.

Skills children need to succeed in life

A six year old child who wants to play with other children, must be able to be socially attentive in following the initiatives of other children. The child has to name his own initiatives and to be able to take turns. He has to have social behavioural models as well as adequate cooperation skills and he has to be able to concentrate. These skills and also other skills such as solving problems and sufficient language to express himself as well as having ideas for playing and working, are necessary in order to make good connections with others. There are some children that don't have these skills and they all get behavioural problems at school. This behaviour also affects the learning situation for the child. We all want to join the group, the society in which we live. And we all want to learn to be a part of the society. The children who don't know how to behave together with their peers have difficulties in many situations and are at risk for psychiatric disorders. In other words the child with developmental problems in basic communication skills needs support in order to continue developing well.

The Marte Meo Method

As a Marte Meo pedagogue as well as a hospital teacher, I can help these children in their own environment, at school. The Marte Meo method helps the school staff to understand the child and support the child in his development.

I take up a five to ten minute film session in order to analyse the interaction between student and teacher. After each film session I have a review session. The use of the video camera allows the teacher to view the child step by step in a way that's impossible in real life. In the view session I give the teacher 'homework' in supporting communication using the Marte Meo Principles. You can read more about the method at <http://www.martemeo.com/site/index.cfm>.

My workshop

In my work-shop, I will show you some films from my work in school. We are going to follow two or three boys that have gone through the Marte Meo Programme. I will tell you a little about each child and his background at home and also his school history. Using the film sequences, I can show you how the child interacts with others and what he needs to work on in order to continue to develop well.



I have taken several films of the boys in order to give review sessions showing the school staff how to continue working with the Marte Meo principles. I will show you some of the sessions so that you can see and follow the work the school staff has done. The best part of filming is that it makes it possible to stop time, to look step by step at what's going on in the interaction. That makes it possible for you to be able to see film sequences where the child is developing his connecting skills.

The child's development

The child's needs and stage of development is in focus instead of the age of the child. The adult can support the child who can have different problems such as language difficulties, autism, ADHD and conduct disorders. The question is not why the child does not have the skills, but how to help the child to develop his connection skills.

The teachers' development

It is nice also to follow the development of the school staff. Their skills are increasing and they have a more professional way of interacting with the child after they have been working with Marte Meo. The teachers change the interpretation of the child's behaviour from "he disturbs and is lazy" to "today he looked at me when I named his initiatives and he realized what he had to do!" The teachers go from having been a victim of the child's behaviour to being the professional leader of the action in the classroom.

The teachers in my films have different education. You will be able to follow teachers who have been unaware how they react on the child's initiatives to connect. They also realize that it is important to approach and handle situations with a different perspective and less negative actions. In my films I have other teachers who work in a special school for children with behavioural disorders. These teachers are very familiar with the impotence of their own interacting with the children and the importance of structure in their work. They know how to be a positive leader who creates a good atmosphere and emotional connections at school. I am glad that I can show you how one of them supports a child in the playground so that he can be part of the group, helping him how to follow the initiatives of the other children.

Even this teacher needs the help of the video and the Marte Meo principles. You can follow her effort to help this child in a couple of sequences from films I have taken during the lessons.

Photos and video recordings during the workshop

It is obvious that it's impossible to show the films' sequences from school work and at the same time let the persons in the film stay anonymous.

I am so glad that the parents of the children and their teachers have given me permission to show you the films. As one parent said: "I wish all teachers could learn how to help children with behavioral disorders to develop well, but I don't want to find films of my child on the Internet."