

battle of the inner truth against a desiccated, mechanical and hostile world (the approach of R.D. Laing). Instead the person emerges simply as someone struggling to create meaning and direction out of a life that seems at times only to consist of despair and restlessness.

The essence of psychotherapy is the relationship between the therapist and client. It is just one of the many

situations which are entered in the expectation of some 'constructive personal change' - for example love affairs, parent-child, teacher-student, and marital relationships. Whether this expectation is fulfilled in psychotherapy will depend, as with these other encounters, on both the participants.

PRINCIPAL REFERENCES

R.R.Carkhuff and B.G.Berenson *Beyond Counselling and Psychotherapy* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winstone. 1967)

H.J.Eysenck *The Effects of Psychotherapy: an evaluation* (J.consult. Psychol., 16,319-324. 1952)

H.J.Eysenck *Behaviour Therapy and Psychotherapy* (New Society 208-10. 1969)

J.T.Hart and T.M.Tomlinson *New Directions in Client Centred Therapy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 1970)

B.Meador *Client Centred Therapy* (in Current Psychotherapies, edited by R. Corsini. In Press.)

M.R.Parloff *Some Factors Affecting the Quality of Therapeutic Relationships* (Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology. 52. 1956)

C.R.Rogers *On Becoming a Person: a Therapist's View of Psychotherapy* (London: Constable. 1957) D.A.Shapiro *Empathy, Warmth and Genuineness* (Br.J.soc.clin. Psychol. 8. 350-361. 1969)

C.B.Truax and R.R.Carkhuff *Towards Effective Counselling and Psychotherapy: Training and Practice.* (Chicago: Aldine. 1967)

Dennis Weston

ENCOUNTER IN THE CLASSROOM

Thirty-five or so children in a class, very little money, limited space and a school that is overcrowded - that is Monday to Friday. That kind of situation is completely different to the usual encounter experience. But the two can be integrated so that humanistic psychology techniques can be used meaningfully in the school. Needless to say - it is a

mammoth task and very difficult to achieve, but very valuable in terms of what we mean by education. During the last two years I have been working along these lines in an ordinary LEA school on the east side of London, using various techniques borrowed from the human potential movement to stimulate the development of the children I work with.

(To provide an opportunity for the children's personal growth.)

One project I used with this class last year was called WHO AM I? The children I was working with were 11 years old and about to transfer to secondary schools. It was a class of mixed ability children with many disturbed children too. They were not learning very successfully and had many problems at home. We began by doing a few non-verbal communication activities extending into gestalt work concerned with the here and now to help the children become aware of what they were actually doing and how they interacted with other children and adults both at home and at school. We usually began with a drama session related to the particular aspect of the WHO AM I? project we were exploring that week. Sometimes we used co-counselling techniques. This technique was used when we were asking WHAT MAKES ME CRY? After some preliminary work, the children got together in pairs and told each other all the things they could remember that had ever made them cry.

Here is a piece written by one of the girls in the class:

'I cry when I have been hurt badly, I usually cry when I cut myself on my leg or face. I also cry when my brother hurts me or when my Mum or Dad smack me. When I was little, my brother was chasing me and I fell over and cut my eye open on a tin bucket, I started to scream and cry. My Dad's friend rushed me up to the hospital and a doctor sprayed hair spray stuff in my eye and a nurse put three stitches in my eye. Sometimes crying makes people feel sorry for you and crying helps you get over something but sometimes if somebody sees you crying they know you can be hurt easily so they boss you around. If somebody calls me

names I feel upset but I don't cry. If I don't get what I want, I sulk. I don't think crying is a nice thing to do.'

Another class, whose reading age is very low and abilities very limited wrote this piece about crying:

'I cry when I feel that I am not wanted. I cry when people bully me and call me names and I think that people hate me. I only cry sometimes when my mum or dad hit me and I cry when I am left out like when they ask my friends to be in their play and not me. I feel upset and I cry if I have a boyfriend and I break up with him and I cry if I am swimming and I am in the deep end and I get stuck in the middle and I get water up my nose. I cry when my pets die because it makes me feel that I killed them. I cried when my grandad died. I cry if I am sick and ill and if people tell me to jump off a very high wall and I say no. I feel such a baby and I cry. I cry in bed sometimes because I think about what it will be like when I die because it looks so dark I think I might go to hell. I cry if I am in a dark room alone because I feel so lonely that I cry. I cry if I get my fingers shut in a door. I cry when sometimes I get told off by a teacher.'

As well as having value for the children, these activities have tremendous value for the teacher. Through the work I did last year I was able to gain much more insight into the children and get closer to understanding how they actually experienced their lives at home and in school. As well as helping the children to think in terms of what actually happens in the here and now we also did some work on fantasy. This was followed through where possible to a situation where a child could identify things that happened day by day with the elements of his fantasy. As an example, here is a fantasy written by the least academically able child of the class:

'ME AT HOME IN BED, floating on the moon when I was in bed with my teddy bear I dreamt I was on the moon I wiggled in bed wiggled like a tree thrashing in a storm hitting people who passed by in the night. I get out of bed and go to the kitchen.' This boy had a reading age of less than 7 years. This child could in the end identify the restlessness of the dream with the restlessness he felt in his everyday life. It took some time before **WHAT MAKES ME ANGRY** work began to flow. The children soon got in touch with superficial anger situations of the day to day angers but it was a long time before they were expressing more deep seated anger. However, this did occur and manifested itself particularly in drama activities and 'bashing the cushion'. Here is an example of one of the less able boys in the class:

'**WHAT MAKES ME ANGRY.** I do not like people calling me names that makes me angry. I do not like people to do things like punching me and I get angry and I hit them back. I hurt them when somebody breaks something of mine, like my bike. I do not like people stealing from me, it makes me angry. I was angry when there was a good film on and there was a power cut. I was angry when there were a lot of good things on and I was missing them. I get angry when my friends tell me what to do and I want to do something else but they will not let me. That makes me angry. I do not like people telling me off. Some of my friends make me angry, like David, he makes me angry, Carlos makes me angry too when I mess up his hair and he hits me and I hit him but he is my best friend, well one of my best friends anyway. Some of my best friends make me angry like Russell. My mum makes me angry when she tells me off for something I haven't done.'

Here Stephen was realising that some of the people who made him most angry were people he cared about more.

The written work and the insights gained by the children always came about through experience and activity. The kind of activities that we did were marching around in the hall and shouting 'NO', going up to the enormous wall bars and telling them 'NO'. 'NO' to the sky, 'NO' to the ground and then walking around saying 'NO' to each other. Some of the more timid children gained especially from this and acquired freedom to object. Electronic music was used as well, the children enjoyed listening to these new sounds and it sparked off their fantasies.

At the end of the year there were marked changes in the class. The children were much more involved in the life of the school and in many ways a lot happier. Children who had previously experienced school as a succession of failures were enjoying their successes. There was a real feeling of belonging. The class was still labelled by other teachers as being very difficult but I think they were difficult in a very different way. They became more creative, more demanding and more alive. Constructive rather than destructive. Reacting in terms of what was happening at the time rather than in terms of inner strifes. It was a very difficult task to work with such lively, energetic and demanding children but they were involved. Their work patterns improved and they were able to concentrate for much longer periods and produced work that could be praised within the normal school criteria. It was the hardest year I ever had with a class but at the same time the most rewarding in terms of my own development as a teacher and in terms of a class of responsive learning