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Obrazna refleksna terapija v šoli

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Introduction

Many students are facing with difficulties in learning, writing, reading comprehension, have problems with concentration and memorizing. With the pilot project "Facial reflexotherapy Sorensensistem in school", which was held at the elementary school Poljane in Ljubljana, has project leader, licensed teacher of Sorensensistem method, Natasa Kos Križmančič, together with a team of trained therapists shown that these problems could be solved with a massage of special points on the face. This is the first such project implemented in Slovenia by the method of world-renowned Danish therapist Lone Sorensen. A similar project took place in Denmark and in the UK. Broadcast »Within four walls« is prepared by Petra Medved.

With facial reflexotherapy they help children in dealing with learning and behavioral problems, difficulties with concentration, hyperactivity and dyslexia, explains licensed teacher of Sorensensistem method Natasa Kos Križmančič. Facial reflexotherapy is a therapy that is performed on the area of the face. We press and rotate on certain points. These are nerve points as well as points that are associated with different meridians or energy paths in the body and on the different zones, facial areas, which have a kind of reflex response in the body. All of this information is passing through the brain, so we actually influence the nervous system and thereby enable the formation of new brain connections. We stimulate the nervous system and therefore the activity of the brain and specific functions of the brain.

Editor: "How is this therapy performed?"

Nataša: "There many points on the face which have different effects on the body. Some affect the energy paths in the body, the meridians. Most of the points which we stimulate are nerve points, nerve endings on the skin and the face so by stimulating them we achieve a certain effect on the brain and consequently on the body. In addition we stimulate particular zones or areas of the body that are reflexively connected with certain organs and organ systems, certain parts of the body and in this way also balance biochemical processes in the body. In this way we achieve a balanced operation of all body functions and body positively responds to all tasks. Children begin to function differently and have a different understanding and perception the world around them. This therapy is basically a combination of various traditions from different parts of the world, from South America, China, Vietnam, India, Tibet and Japan. These maps, as we call them, were compiled by Mrs. Lone Sorensen, who is the author of the method, into a comprehensive method 35 years ago. She has done a lot of research and projects and she developed this method that actually works on human on several levels: emotional, physical, mental and energy, so it fully embraces the issue. Especially successful is on the children who are still developing. Their nervous system and brains are until the age of 12 years still

developing and reach some kind of climax, so we are therefore even more successful with children.”

Editor: “For which children, with what kind of difficulties is this therapy appropriate?”

Nataša: “This therapy is in fact very suitable for a very wide range of problems. Here in this project, which is held at elementary school Poljane, we covered only part of the options, because we are somehow focused on the problems that children today are facing at school. These are: attention deficit disorder, concentration issues, dyslexia, difficulties with reading and writing, hyperactivity, learning difficulties, difficulties in solving and understanding tasks.”

Editor: “In this project there were with voluntary work involved 10 certified therapists and 11 children from a primary school Poljane in Ljubljana in the age group from 8 to 11 years. Natasa Kos Križmančič tells what the therapy included.”

Nataša: “When the kids came to class, we first encouraged them to drink a glass of water and then we did brain exercise. The reason for the brain exercise is that they have an impact on better communication between left and right cerebral hemisphere, on balance and coordination of the body and visual perception. In this way the children also improved their reading and writing abilities. Then the therapy followed which was performed on the face – facial reflexotherapy. We also advised parents on diet during the duration of the project and we gave them certain diet guidelines that they should stick to. Diet which is free of preservatives, dyes, without excessive amounts of sugar and white flour is actually very beneficial for brain function. Supplements such as omega-3 are very suitable for development of the brain as well.”

Editor: “How many therapies are need in order for results to be seen?”

Nataša: “Regarding the number of therapies I can talk about approximate figures. We designed this project in terms of ten therapies because this is a kind of optimal minimum, when you can already detect some results. But in order to achieve a success for all children, visible success or more significant steps in the development of the child, I would advise performing more therapies. Such help would be suitable as a constant help in school, not only as a short-term project, because the results with some children may not appear until later. The curve of child development and response to therapy shows that some children respond sooner and some later. It may be unfair to some children who have more difficult issues, because they have just started to show some progress, but the project is ending.”

Editor: “And how did facial reflexotherapy affect the students?”

One of the children: “I feel great, because it relaxes me and I can concentrate easier. I don’t have stage fright anymore during speech, presentations and verbal exams.”

Editor: “Tell me, how are you feeling?”

One of the children: *"Great, relaxed, very good."*

Editor: *"What is it feeling after this therapy?"*

One of the children: *"Sleepy."*

Editor: *"Have you ever fallen asleep?"*

One of the children: *"Yes, once."*

Editor: *"Therapists massage your face."*

One of the children: *"Yes, they massage us on different points."*

Editor: *"How does this massage or therapy help you at school?"*

One of the children: *"I sleep better and read easier."*

Editor: *"Does the teacher notice the improvement or do you notice it yourself? Do have also better grades because of this?"*

One of the children: *"I have better grades because of this. The teacher doesn't notice anything, only I notice."*

Editor: *"What do you like the most about this therapy?"*

One of the children: *"When I can relax and I have nothing to work."*

Editor: *"Therapists have prepared individual therapy plans. Therapies were performed 10 weeks in a row once a week. Reflexotherapist Pavla Zupančič from Novo Mesto."*

One of the therapists: *"I think this was an exciting project, which was introduced by Nataša. It's great to see the results on children who have learning and concentration difficulties. I've been working in the area of reflexotherapy for quite some time now, but I don't have much experience with children who have dyslexic difficulties, so I was curious about the effects on both individuals as well as entire group."*

Editor: *"And what have you noticed?"*

One of the therapists: *"I had a girl who had dyslexia problems, difficulties with concentration, poor reading comprehension, difficulties with solving mathematical tasks and numbers issue. She's reserved and still has a lot of stage fright. However her understanding of reading texts has improved, including better solving mathematical tasks. Her mother says she's calmer and*

I noticed that as well, except today when she's expecting to go somewhere with her family and was excited about the journey. In this case the therapy session was definitely too long for her in any way."

Editor: "Do you think that this therapy should be implemented into the school system to help such children?"

One of the therapists: "I think so, because the results from other countries where this therapy is implemented in the schools proved to be very good and that children achieve better learning results. This project was very interesting for me, it gave me a new insight on these matters. Most of all it is great to see a group of children who are supposed to have major problems, but during the therapy, we almost did not notice this."

Editor: "Reflexotherapist Katarina Arko from Sodražica put a lot of devotion to her child."

One of the therapists: "In the very beginning he had problems such as hyperactivity, dyslexia, changing letters, issues with concentration and memorizing. These were the major issues. During the therapy there was improvement in better grades, less changing letters and better memorizing. He was very proud of himself, so he quickly memorized a part of a song and sing it today. There is a progress. And in such a simple, easy and natural way it seems to me that this is something unique that can help a child with such problems, which today are much common and can be very disturbing."

Editor: "Have you performed this kind of therapy before or is this first such a project where you participate?"

One of the therapists: "This is a practically a pilot project: This was the first time we are working with several children at once. This is really something new in Slovenia and I think it will not be the last project."

Editor: "What does such help to children mean to you?"

One of the therapists: "It means a lot. It is right for people to see how we can help children in such an easy and natural way. I think it's great that there were 10 children in this place. At the beginning we thought it will be very disturbing, because children belong to different age groups, but it was really nice. We were all breathing as one, kids were relaxed. I think it was a wonderful atmosphere."

Editor: "Some of them have even fallen asleep during the therapy."

One of the therapists: "The child I was working with was one of those. It was really nice to see how a child who doesn't know you can become relaxed immediately. They trusted us."

Editor: “Anja Cesar is a reflexotherapist and a special educator from Bohinj. She’s using facial reflexotherapy at her work at school. She has already noticed positive changes in children.”

One of the therapists: *“I decided to educate myself in facial reflexotherapy with the purpose to upgrade my knowledge. When I watched Natasa Kos Križmančič talking about facial reflexotherapy on TV, she also spoke about children with special needs. This caught my attention, so I decided to expand my knowledge. I am using facial reflexotherapy at my work at school. I work at a primary school with students who have learning difficulties. I work individually and I implement the elements of facial reflexotherapy into my work. Facial reflexotherapy is a very good complement, since it works on the nervous system and circulatory system. It works holistic, it calms children. They improve concentration and attention. They have better control over their behavior and their body.”*

Editor: “And you perform this with children voluntarily at your school?”

One of the therapists: *“At my school I perform this within my work. I work as a special educator, so I basically implement the elements of facial reflexotherapy within my working hours. But it would be great if the entire therapies could be performed as a part of the school system. This would be a great contribution to the school system.”*

Editor: “What do you notice? What kind of success do children who go to therapy at school have?”

One of the therapists: *“In this project “Facial reflexotherapy in school” I was working with two children. Both of them have dyslexia. There are also behavioral and emotional problems, difficulty with concentration, attention and sleeping. In all the areas the situation has improved. There are fewer problems in reading, concentration is better. One child himself mentioned that he can much easier follow the teacher in classroom. He can control his behavior easier and doesn’t interrupt the teacher as much as he used to. He has less conflicts with his classmates. I also notice that other children that I work with are a lot calmer. Their progress is improved mainly due to a better awareness of oneself, because they improve the working habits as well. They do their homework more regularly.”*

Editor: “We know that many children are hyperactive. There are emotional-behavioral issues as well. Do you think that these problems could be gone if children had such therapies in school?”

One of the therapists: *“Yes, as far as hyperactivity goes we have wonderful results. We have achieved great results also in the area of behavioral and emotional difficulties. Children are much calmer, so this would be a really wonderful contribution to the school system, if these therapies were introduced into school work.”*

Editor: “You work on these projects on a voluntary basis. You dedicate your time the children.”

One of the therapists: *“Yes, so this is a voluntary project, but a wonderful experience. As a reflexotherapist and as a special educator I have more individual work. Working together with 10 other reflexotherapists in one class and at the same time is really rich experience. In this way we can also exchange ideas and information and I think that every reflexotherapist gained a lot with this project, just as well as the children.”*

Editor: “Participating children were with the invitation of the school counselor applied to the project by their parents who were formerly acquainted with the method and its effects. Maja Žižmund.”

One of the parents: *“I think this is really a great opportunity for a child to find out there are also other ways (besides school work) to relax and maybe look more into yourself. Since my daughter herself realizes that she has some difficulties with reading and concentration, she also encouraged us to become part of this group. So decision was easier for both of us.”*

Editor: “You mentioned difficulties. What about now after the therapy?”

One of the parents: *“She notices herself that she can concentrate easier. Others notice that as well. Above all she can read easier. She is more able to concentrate and reads more fluently. These were the main issues. We noticed that during the therapy the situation has improved.”*

Editor: “How satisfied are you with the therapy?”

One of the parents: *“We are both very happy with the therapy. Zoja exceptionally enjoys it. She wants to perform this therapy on me and she massages me at home. We both think that this is a good addition to the child's development.”*

Editor: “This therapy is completed now. Do you wish it would continue?”

One of the parents: *“Yes, we are both considering to continue the therapy. Zoja wants to see of herself if the things continue to improve and I want to offer my child something more, not just the classical school, but something to relax.”*

Editor: “The project “Facial reflexotherapy” took place at an elementary school Poljane in Ljubljana. School counselor Susan Klemenčič explained why the school decided to implement this project and what they noticed on students after the therapy.”

School counselor: *“The number of these problems, I don't know why, seems to be rising. Either because they are really rising or we just notice them more. There are many children with all kinds of problems and I believe that the causes are neurological. That's why I found this therapy, which affects the neurological structure of the child, something that could be helpful.”*

I think that there's still a lot of things that could be developed in this direction, but this is one of the beginnings. The results that we noticed are the openness and self-confidence of the children. It seems to us that children are actually here. They show themselves, they are more courageous. They ask more and laugh more. They gained self-confidence. They are more noticeable in the classroom. They used to be hiding, but now they are seen. Even when you go along the corridor, they are seen and here now."

Editor: "Children are getting a lot of attention during the therapy. How do you think that attention affects the school work?"

School counselor: *"This seems to me a significant part of these results as well. I mean the attention when every week there is one person who is available to one child: to dedicate to him with massage, therapy, conversation and attention. I think this is a very important part that children lack of. This individual attention contributed to these results significantly."*

Editor: "The results of the project have shown that children after ten therapies read and write better. They are calmer and less conflicting. They solve tasks faster and easier. They are more confident and communicate easier. They are more focused and less interruptive in class. They fall asleep faster and easier. The project leader Nataša Kos Križmančič told about the facial reflexotherapy the following."

Nataša: *"My goal was to achieve the results in children and we managed to do so. My aim is also to raise the awareness among parents and teachers that we can help children with the natural method, which is completely painless and pleasant. In this way children are able to reach the inner balance, self-esteem and self-confidence so it is easier for them to cope with the tasks they have in life. We also give them some sort of support for all the challenges that await them in school. At the same time my purpose is to bring such a project on a national level so all the children in Slovenia have the opportunity to get this kind of help."*

Editor: "What encouraged you to organize this project? Did you use to have such problems yourself?"

Nataša: *"I didn't have similar problems, neither did my children, but I am receptive to the problems of children for many years. Many years ago I conducted summer camps for Zois scholarship recipients and I have designed a very comprehensive program. At that time I was promoting art, philosophy, music and dance. I was active in this field, but with the same aim, namely to expand the limits of perception of children and to raise their self-esteem. My aim was also to enable them to operate confidently and sovereignly in the world, which was for them the world of adults. Similarly I also work in the therapeutic field. I think that children can be helped, encouraged and supported in the areas where there are some sort of shortcomings or problems. That's how they can easier integrate into the world, work at their best, achieve and live their potential."*