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Procedure for Supporting Personal Self-Determination of Future Teachers Using an Individual Development Trajectory

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Abstract

In line with the post-nonclassical educational paradigm, humanitarian practices, including support, are becoming necessary. Understanding the personal self-determination support as mediation implies the search for a “toolbox” that is not alienated from the personality. An individual development trajectory integrating the intra- and inter-subjective aspects of self-determination is considered to be the main support. The need to objectify and operationalize the supporting process actualizes the problem of theoretical justification and design for supporting procedure. We consider the supporting procedure as a well-founded procedure for the subjects’ actions. The procedure is provided by the identification of the supporting stages, a description of the subjects’ actions and their results. Supporting stages are isomorphic to the basic stages of self-determination and, accordingly, include: support at the stage of “self-determination itself”, support at the stage of self-realization and support at the stage of personal self-actualization. The teacher’s “functionality” includes actions aimed at activating the processes of the personality’s self-determination in its inter- and inter-subjective aspects: personality “immersion” in the activities using a wide arsenal of cultural mediators (word, image, action) and methods such as analysis of problem situations, game imitation actions, social communication and professional tests; facilitation of analysis, reflection and practical student’s actions. The student activities include: analysis of problem situations, “trial” activity of the person in modelled situations, activity in professional and living contexts; reflex of his actions. The coordinated nature of subjects’ activities is ensured not only by the use of appropriate toolkit, but also by facilitating character of their interaction.

Keywords: personal self-determination, self-regulation, activity, pedagogical support, mediation, individual trajectory of development, stages, actions, results of support.

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Introduction

The relevance of the study is related to the changing functions of professional (including pedagogical) education in a dynamically changing social reality. The criteria-normalised notions of the educational results, which imply their description in the form of some static competency models, are replaced by process-oriented notions of the “possible person” (Mamardashvili, 1992), about human resources and potential (Leontyev, 2011). Education is therefore seen not so much as a set of standardized components, but as an essential context for personal development. Thus, personal development becomes the basic methodological category underlying education. Development, understood as a prolonged process of qualitative changes, involves an increase in the “quality” of the individual in the educational context, increasing the level of his/her self-determination and self-organization. At the same time, the fundamental inexhaustibility and immeasurability of human resources, constant “stay in change” allows one to speak of the person as an “open project” of him/herself, as a subject capable of managing the process of his/her own development. In the light of the above, it is well founded that the authors associate educational prospects with the affirmation of its humanitarian meaning and the establishment of new educational models and practices: heutagogy as a model of independent heuristic training (Ignatovich, 2013; Kenyon & Hase, 2010); self-defining adult education model (Ignatieva, Tulupova, & Matchina, 2019); educational travel model (Kovaleva, 2014); humanitarian educational practices (support, tutorial, anthropopractices) (Elkonin, 2011; Makarova, 2012; Rozin, 2017; Shchedrovitsky, 2011). These models and practices are the expression of the post-nonclassical paradigm of education. The post-nonclassical paradigm implies a change in the purpose of education – not just the training of a competent professional, but the promotion of the individual’s development, self-determination and self-organization and the development of his or her identity (Makarova, 2012). The post-nonclassical paradigm also determines the changes in the interaction and attitudes of the teacher and learner: student – subject of activity, relations, choice; teacher – navigator, moderator, facilitator, whose main function is to support the student in the educational process (Makarova, 2012).

Support is the humanitarian educational practice demanded in modern conditions aimed at mediating and facilitating the processes of students’ personal development, at actualization of their personal potential, at realization of “a person possible”. One of the basic personal development processes is self-determination, the process that initiates “internal” and “external” personality movement to himself or herself. In this regard, the “subject” of pedagogical support in our study is the personal self-determination of students – future teachers.

Considering personal self-determination in an educational context, in the context of activities understood as purposeful meaningful individual activity, we emphasize the operational interpretation of personal self-determination (Frumin & Elkonin, 1993; Krylova, 2000; Neumoeva-Kolchedantseva, 2017). At the same time, on the basis of the general theory of activity, we do not limit ourselves to the analysis of the “external plan” of the activity for self-determination. We consider the “internal” plan of self-determination as a mechanism for existential-semantic self-regulation of the personality. The need to “retain” these two plans determines the search for an effective “tool” of support, as which we consider the individual development trajectory, understood as a kind of “path” for personality development in the context of different activities (Neumoeva-Kolchedantseva, 2020b). Earlier, we proposed a general design for the support procedure using an individual developmental trajectory as an integrative tool that will be the basis for achieving the purpose of this study.

Purpose and objectives of the study

The purpose of the research is theoretical justification and design of the pedagogical support procedure for the personal self-determination of the future teacher using the individual development trajectory as an integrative means of support.

Literature review

With the post-nonclassical paradigm of vocational education in place, support issues attract increasing attention from scientists and practitioners. At the same time, depending on the initial conceptual bases, a variety of interpretations of support are proposed, reflecting both the essence of support and its “technology”. Thus, in a rather traditional perspective, support is considered as the creation of socio-psychological and pedagogical conditions: for learning, development and self-development of personality (Zeer & Popova, 2015); for the formation of future teachers as meaningful subjects for professional development, consciously “building” their professional identity (Belyakova, 2018); for the development of student’s ability to build his/her professional future based on designing an individual educational route (Zeer & Popova, 2015). In the concept of subject professionalization, support is considered as assistance to activate the mechanisms of personal self-development (Glukhanyuk, 2003). Another interpretation of support is to help the teacher make the optimal choice in the face of the multifactorial influence exerted on him/her (Symanyuk, Pecherkina & Umnikova, 2011). Support is also seen as the optimization of the person’s relationships with the educational environment towards their constructiveness and productivity (Emelyanova, 2012).

A review of the above interpretations of support leads to the conclusion that the leading perspectives of consideration are the conditions for personality development in the educational context, there is a variety in understanding of “objects”, purposes and support content. Great importance is attached to the “technological” aspect of support and specific psychotechniques. The “technological” aspect of support is generally characterized as a complex of organizational, diagnostic, training and developing activities. Let us note that this interpretation assumes the leading role of the supporting person, not the supported person, negates the importance of their interaction, as well as the value of the supported subject’s own activity and, in general, casts doubt on the humanitarian meaning of support.

Methodology

The objective basis of the integral personality properties and processes is activity outside of which any talk about personal development loses meaning. Considering the support of the future teacher’s personal self-determination in the educational context, we rely on the system-activity approach (Asmolov, 2009), according to which a person’s involvement in activity is the most important mechanism of personality development. The self-determination of the future teacher’s personality is exercised in the educational context, in the process of educational, professional, research activities, in the course of activities in a variety of situations. Activity is viewed as a system of organized, purposeful, transformative activity, the system-forming factor of which is the result. It is activity that provides the empirical material, experience and knowledge, “processing” which the student determines his/her position. A kind of “superstructure” above the activity is reflexive-thought processes that provide individuals the opportunity to control his or her development. Designing, which is the main method of this research, based on the system-research methodology (Shchedrovitsky, 1995) is considered as a type of human activity focused on solving problem tasks using sign-knowledge means.

Results

The inter-subjective aspect of self-determination relates to the objective aspect of activity. However, the influence of activity on personal self-determination is mediated by interaction processes and specific sign-knowledge mediators that exist objectively in culture (sign, word, action) (Neumoeva-Kolchedantseva, 2020a). The intra-subjective aspect of self-determination relates to the subjective aspect of the activity.

Based on the multi-regulatory model of Leontyev (2010), as well as on the results of our experimental research (Neumoeva-Kolchedantseva, 2020c), we consider self-determination as a mechanism of personality self-regulation, whose development is linked to “transition” of the personality from the “social individual” stage to the stage of a relatively autonomous self-determined subject, consciously shaping the individual situation and development tasks. In developing self-determination as a self-regulation mechanism, we conditionally distinguish such stages as “self-determination proper”, self-realization and self-actualization. “Transparency” of the boundaries between these stages allows viewing them as a kind of continuum for personal self-determination (Neumoeva-Kolchedantseva, 2020c). Understanding support as a process of mediating personal self-determination presupposes not only the “immersion” of the person in the activity, but also the search for cultural mediators allowing to activate “self-processes” of the personality. As the main support, we consider individual development trajectory, which means a kind of “path” for personal development of the future teacher, resulting in the activity (Neumoeva-Kolchedantseva, 2020b). The individual trajectory of development, being both an “internal” route of movement, and objectively represented in activity by the person in the space of activities - in the space of objective possibilities, integrates the inter- and intra-subject aspects of self-determination, as well as a wide range of methods and means relevant to the tasks of self-determination (Neumoeva-Kolchedantseva, 2020b). In this way, support using the individual development trajectory “builds up” in the logic of self-determination, which ensures its inalienable character, and therefore increases the probability of successful assistance in personality development.

Considering the construction of an individual development trajectory on the basis of the general theory of activity (Anisimov, 2000; Shchedrovitsky, 1995), we operated with such concepts as “original material” (the actual level of personality development), “norm” of development (objective about the teacher’s potential level of development, personification of these ideas – design of own potential level of development), transformation space (educational context), transformation of material into a product (activity), means and methods for obtaining the product (methods and means aimed at solving problems of personality self-determination); reflection processes (methods and means aimed at awareness and comprehending the process and “results” of a person’s self-determination).

The next logical step of our research is the design of a procedure to support personal self-determination using the individual development trajectory as an integrative means of support. We consider the support procedure to be a sound procedure for the actions of the actors, giving the activity a structure. The procedure is provided by the identification of the supporting stages, a description of the subjects’ actions and their results. The content of this structure is determined by the “subject matter” of the support (personal self-determination in the interrelation of its inter- and intra-subjective aspects).

Let us look at the procedure for supporting a future teacher's personal self-determination. The stages of support are isomorphic to the main stages of self-determination and therefore include: support at the stage of "self-determination proper", support at the stage of self-realization, support at the stage of personal self-actualization. At each stage, the solution of problematic tasks and the use of means and methods that are relevant to its content are assumed.

1. *"Self-determination proper"*. Purpose: revitalizing the basic processes for self-determination (self-knowledge, self-awareness, self-assessment, and self-projection) and prepare for action

Inter-subjective aspect of personal self-determination

Supporting activities (teacher): "theoretical" immersion in problematic situations.

Supported activities (student): analysis of problem situations, modeling one's actions in value choice situations.

Means: verbal, figurative (visual-graphic).

Methods: problem analysis; simulation of value choices; narrative techniques (reflective essay).

Intra-subjective aspect of personal self-determination

Supporting activities (teacher): facilitation of analysis and reflection processes (reflexive workshop).

Supported activities (student): process and problem analysis reflections.

Support results: Potential level of personality development project.

2. *Self-realization*. Purpose: organization and support of "trial" personality activity.

Inter-subjective aspect of personality self-determination

Supporting activities (teacher): practical immersion in problem situations in simulation mode.

Supported activities (student): "trial" personality activity.

Means: verbal, figurative (visual-graphic), actions in simulated situations.

Methods: game imitative actions.

Intra-subjective aspect of personality self-determination

Supporting activities (teacher): Facilitation of the subject's actions in problem situations in simulation mode, process and results reflection of the "trial" personality activity.

Supported activities (student): reflexive workshop.

Support results: practical immersion in problematic situations in simulation mode.

3. *Self-actualization*. Purpose: expanding the context of "trial" activity, encouraging non-adaptive activity and supporting the realization of the personality's potential.

Inter-subjective aspect of personality self-determination

Supporting activities (teacher): practical immersion in problematic situations in professional and living contexts.

Supported activities (student): activities in professional and living contexts.

Means: verbal, visual-graphic, actions in real situations in professional and living contexts.

Methods: professional and social communication tests.

Intra-subjective aspect of personality self-determination

Supporting activities (teacher): facilitation of the subject's actions in professional and living contexts, process and results reflection of the subject's activity.

Supported activities (student): reflexive workshop.

Support results: practical immersion in problem situations in professional and living contexts.

Integrative means of support and integrative result of self-determination: student individual development trajectory project.

Thus, the support procedure is built on the "junction" of the inter- and intra-subject aspects for self-determination and includes a description for the supporting person's (teacher) and the supported person's (student) activities at each stage of support, aimed at organizing and facilitating the student's activities.

Organizing student activities in its objective aspect (intersubjective aspect of self-determination) involves methodological support: recommendations on the “use” of the proposed methods and means. Activating student’s activity in its subjective aspect (the intra-subjective aspect of self-determination) also involves facilitation of reflection on the process and results of the subject’s activities. The use of a wide range for mediation means (word, image, action) corresponds to the multimodal nature of a person’s experience and enriches the possibilities of support. The coherence of the actors is ensured not only through the use of appropriate tools, but also by the dialogical nature of their interaction. The whole procedure “is subordinated” to the task of designing an individual development trajectory, the project of which is an integrative “instrumental” result of support. The trajectory project, in its turn, reflects the positive dynamics of the student’s personal self-determination, wherein it has an “open” and incomplete character, which is associated with the fundamental incompleteness of personality development.

Discussion

The presented support procedure as a whole makes it possible to objectivize and operationalize the interaction of a supporting person and a supported person: as a sort of route for the subjects’ actions. It provides important guidelines both for the design of the teacher’s activities and for the self-organization of the student’s activities. The “functionality” of the teacher’s activities includes actions aimed at intensifying the processes of personality’s self-determination in his or her inter- and intra-subjective aspects. The organization of the student’s activities in an objective aspect is not particularly difficult and implies in the future the preparation of methodological support (methods and means), relevant to the tasks of self-determination (activation of basic processes of self-determination, organization of “trial” activity, expanding the context of the “trial” activity). However, the humanitarian nature of support involves the importance of facilitating the student’s activities and the reflexion of process and results. The facilitative nature of the support depends to a great extent on the teacher’s identity and with difficulty “succumbs” to operationalization. In this regard, Leontyev (2012) considers facilitation as an alternative to the psychotechnical approach and notes that it (facilitation) is aimed at stimulating positive changes in the personality, but does not imply an orientation towards a given, programmed result. However, recognizing the facilitating essence of support and “embedding” facilitation into the support procedure, we have to look in the future for the options of “accommodating” this process, including the use of “soft” (developing, initiating and activating) and flexible (allowing to vary the actions, take into account the life context) methods.

Conclusion

Thus, the post-nonclassical education paradigm involves the development and approval of humanitarian educational practices, which include pedagogical support for the personal self-determination of students – future teachers. The support procedure, the theoretical substantiation and design of which are presented in this study, is built on the basis of the activity methodology through the integration of inter- and intra-subject aspects of self-determination and involves the “use” of individual trajectory as an integrative means of support and other methods and means that are not alienated from the personality. The “instrumental” value of the procedure lies in the fact that it is a kind of design for a support methodology, the design of which (and detailed consideration of specific methods and means of support) will be the nearest prospect of our research. In complete, we note that we see the strategic importance of the support procedure in the fact that it acts as an institutional form of support and, thus, is intended to contribute to its legitimization as a humanitarian educational practice. We also hope that the material of our study will contribute to intensifying the professional discussion on the issues of supporting the personal self-determination for future teachers.

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