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Individual Development Trajectory as a Means for Personal Self-Determination Support of Future Teachers

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Abstract

Personal self-determination is an inter- and intrapsychic process of an active nature, carried out through the “trying” activity of the personality. There is a need for a pedagogical mechanism that mediates the personal self-determination of the future teacher in the process of activity. As such a mechanism, we consider pedagogical support, as the main means of support, we propose to consider the individual trajectory of personality development. The research problem lies in the poor representation of the category “individual development trajectory” in psychological and pedagogical science, the undeveloped procedure for constructing the individual trajectory of the personality development of the future teacher in the educational process. The purpose of the study is to justify the construct “personal development trajectory” of future teachers; to review support procedures for personal self-determination of future teachers using individual trajectory of development of the student. Research methods are an analysis of author’s approaches to the interpretation of the terms “individual educational trajectory”, “individual educational route”, “individual development trajectory”; substantiation of the need to introduce the construct “individual development path” in the context of the personal orientation of education; designing the procedure for supporting the personal self-determination of a future teacher using an individual development path in the logic of a system-activity approach and a general theory of activity. The conducted research allows us to draw a conclusion about the need for further conceptualization of ideas about the individual trajectory of development. The research results can be used for further objectification and operationalization of personal self-determination of future teachers. The perspective of our research will be the questions of further detailing the procedure for supporting the personal self-determination of future teachers using an individual development trajectory as an integrative means of support.

Keywords: educational process, personal self-determination, activity, pedagogical support, individual trajectory of development, procedure for pedagogical support of personal self-determination of future teachers.

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Introduction

The relevance of the research problem is associated with the variability of modern social reality, which inevitably has a destabilizing effect on the individual, casts doubt on the stability of social and professional identity, and actualizes the problem of searching for mechanisms of “coping” with objective variability and uncertainty. Under such conditions, the study of the phenomenology and problems of the personality and its development, including the personal self-determination of the future teacher, is of particular relevance.

Modern trends in teacher education. One of the trends in the development of teacher education is its individualization, which suggests the possibility of student self-determination in the educational process. The idea of the determining role of the teacher’ personality historically formed in pedagogy due to the development of humanistic ideas has become a kind of axiom. A modern teacher is a teacher, relatively independent of the formal circumstances of pedagogical activity, working not only through a narrow circle of subject competencies, but mainly “by him/herself” – by a system of his/her value orientations, motives, beliefs and principles, ready and capable of self-determination, self-realization, self-actualization in difficult conditions of activity. Another trend is the practical orientation of teacher education, which suggests: increasing the amount of practical work, strengthening the “technological” component of education, the formation of specific life and professional skills that are in demand in the 21st century. We do not deny the need for practice-oriented training of future teachers (and we are actively working in this direction), we understand the importance of teacher’s compliance with professional standards, possession of modern educational technologies, and the acquisition of pedagogical experience at the stage of professional training. However, with a simplified understanding of practical orientation, there is a risk of leveling the personality and the possibilities of its self-determination in the educational process. Therefore, we consider it extremely important in the circumstances to draw attention to the problem of personal self-determination of the future teacher.

The research problem lies in the poor representation of the category “individual development trajectory” in psychological and pedagogical science, the insufficient level of understanding and definition, the undeveloped procedure for constructing the individual trajectory of the personality development for the future teacher in the educational process.

Thus, the appeal to the construct “individual development trajectory” is determined by the need to understand the possibilities for personal self-determination of a future teacher and to accompany this process in an educational context.

Purpose and objectives of the study

To substantiate the construct “individual development trajectory” of the future teacher; to consider the procedure for supporting the personal self-determination of a future teacher using an individual student development trajectory in the logic of a system-activity approach (Asmolov, 2009) and a general theory of activity (Anisimov, 2000; Shchedrovitsky, 1995).

Literature review

Today in psychology, personal self-determination is usually considered in connection with the processes of self-knowledge, self-identification, choice of life goals and plans. There are many interpretations of personal self-determination: a prolonged process of choice, awareness, purposeful formation of a person's life position within a certain coordinate system; the formation of attitudes to reality in the process of interaction with the environment and the search for one's way of life; the formation of “design” of yourself and your life, professional activity, etc.

However, considering the personal self-determination of a future teacher in an educational context, we do not pretend to be a complete review of all approaches and focus on the “activity-based” interpretations of personal self-determination (Frumin & El'konin, 1993; Krylova, 2000; Neumoeva-Kolchedanceva, 2017). At the same time, understanding the activity in a simplified way (as its external plan), we again run the risk of “losing” the subject. This is unacceptable at the modern level of psychological and pedagogical science and educational practice.

“Immersion” in activity is a necessary but not sufficient condition for personal self-determination. A certain pedagogical mechanism is needed that mediates the personal self-determination of a future teacher in the process of activity. As such a mechanism, we consider the pedagogical support of the personal self-determination of the future teacher. In order to carry out an intermediary function, in addition to the personality maturity of the person accompanying him/her, some additional “tools” are needed to objectify and operationalize the process of personal self-determination. As the main means of support, we propose to consider the individual trajectory of personality development.

It should be noted that the more well-known and increasingly widespread in connection with the individualization of education concepts are “individual educational trajectory” and “individual educational route” (the first concept, as a rule, but not always, is considered as generic in relation to the second). Consider the prevailing interpretations of these concepts: the student's line of movement for mastering the

educational program (Gayazov, 2015); a personal way to achieve students the set educational goals corresponding to their abilities, motives, interests, needs (Sysoev, 2013); personal way of mastering the content of education (Aleksandrova, 2010); the ability to design the content of your education (Belyakova, 2018); personal path and the result of the realization of each student's personal potential in education through the implementation of relevant activities (needs pedagogical support, as the author emphasizes) (Hutorskoj, 2005); purposefully designed differentiated educational program that provides the learner with the position of the subject of choice when teachers provide pedagogical support for his/her self-determination and self-realization (Labunskaya, 2002); individual path in education, determined by the student in conjunction with the teacher, organized taking into account the motivation, abilities, psychological and physiological characteristics of the student and objective factors (Timoshina, 2010); man's conscious and responsible choice of his own career path in accordance with his personal potential, prevailing values, attitudes and meanings of life (Zeer & Popova, 2015). A review of the presented interpretations allows us to conclude that: an individual educational trajectory (or route) in most cases is considered in connection with an educational activity, as a kind of "way" to carry out this activity and often "carries" the main components of this activity (purpose, content), factors of its success (taking into account the individual psychological characteristics of the subject, supporting and accompanying by the teacher). We supplement this review: the success of building an individual educational trajectory involves a systematic reflection and clarification of the choice made, and correction of one's path (Alekseev, 2005). Only a few authors associate individual educational trajectories with the development and self-determination of personality (Belyakova, 2018; Hutorskoj, 2005; Labunskaya, 2002; Zeer & Popova, 2015). The first author to use this concept is Bochkaryova; under the individual development trajectory, she understands "the student's line of movement in the self-development of the personality with its peculiar, unique features" (Bochkaryova, 2010, p. 72).

Methodology

Research methodology: system-activity approach (Asmolov, 2009), according to which the involvement of a person in activity is the most important mechanism for personality development; general theory of activity (Anisimov, 2000; Shchedrovitsky, 1995), according to which activity must be considered in the relationship of internal and external plans. The theoretical and methodological foundations allow us to consider activity at the proper level of generalization and taking into account its structure.

Research methods: analysis of author's approaches to the interpretation of the terms "individual educational trajectory", "individual educational route", "individual development trajectory"; substantiation of the need to introduce the construct "individual development trajectory" in the context of the personal orientation of education; designing the procedure for supporting the personal self-determination of a future teacher using

an individual development path in the logic of a system-activity approach and a general theory of activity (that is, in the unity of its external and internal sides, as well as with the introduction of such structural components and categories of analysis as – norm, source material, product, method, means, etc. (Peterson & Kubysheva, 2016).

Results

The educational context of self-determination provides the future teacher with many opportunities for a “test of strength” in various types of activities (educational, quasi-professional, professional, etc.). The personal self-determination of the future teacher as an inter- and intrapsychic process of an active nature is carried out through the “trying” activity of the person and the construction of options for possible actions (Frumin & El'konin, 1993), through the “test” of a person him/herself in different life situations (“cultural practices”) (Krylova, 2000), through “professional trials” (Neumoeva-Kolchedanceva, 2017), situations of “uncertainty” in which there is no initially correct and / or right solution and, accordingly, many opportunities and choices are provided (Leont'ev, 2011). However, to prevent the randomness of these searches, to give them a vector of purposeful and meaningful activity, support is necessary as a practice of mediating personal self-determination in the process of activity.

As we have noted above, we consider the individual trajectory as the main means of accompaniment. At the same time, the literature review showed that the more studied concepts are “individual educational trajectory” and “individual educational route”. We want to note that the narrowing of the concept of “individual educational trajectory (or route)” to the trajectory of learning activity does not seem entirely justified if we take into account the complex nature of education and its understanding in the unity and interconnection of the processes of parenting, learning and development, as is customary at the level of modern pedagogy. In other words, the identification of the educational trajectory with the trajectory of learning activity is fraught with a return to the knowledge paradigm, which contradicts the personal orientation of modern education. Thus, in order to draw attention to self-determination and personal development in the educational process and in the educational context as a whole, and taking into account the trend of individualization of education, it is necessary to introduce such a construct as an “individual development trajectory” of the student (pupil) in the activity. The individual trajectory of development is the “path” of self-development of the individual.

The system-based approach, which is known to be the methodological basis of modern educational standards, emphasizes the role of activity in the development of the individual (or rather, the inclusion of the individual in the activities), and the activity is considered as a system of organized, purposeful,

transformative activity, the system-forming factor of which is the result. “Learning activity is an organ of development, self-development, self-education of a person” (Asmolov, 2009). At the same time, the leading aspect of the consideration of activity in the system-activity approach is its internal plan. In the general theory of activity, activity is considered in the unity of its external (the objective part of activity is the functioning and development of activity in society) and the internal sides (the subject part of activity is the mechanisms of “entering” a person into activity and its implementation) (Anisimov, 2000; Shchedrovitsky, 1995). The description of activities in the general theory of activity is significantly supplemented by the introduction of such structural components and categories of analysis as: norm, source material, product, method, means, etc. (Peterson & Kubysheva, 2016). At the same time, the first question about the structure of activity was put by Leontiev (2005) who highlighted its key elements, such as: the process of transformation, subject, purpose, motivation, control, reflection, etc.

So, the inter- and intrapsychic, activity-related nature of self-determination identifies the need to accompany this process. Pedagogical support as a practice of socio-cultural mediation of the personal self-determination of a future teacher in educational activities (and, more broadly, in the educational context) is an integral part of personality-oriented education, has its own “functionality” that does not duplicate the traditional role of a teacher and requires its own “instrumentation”. We will try to build a procedure for supporting the personal self-determination of a future teacher using an individual development trajectory in the logic of a system-activity approach and a general theory of activity.

According to the general theory of activity (Anisimov, 2000; Shchedrovitsky, 1995), its initial basis is an objectively existing norm. The “obligatory” socio-cultural nature of the norm gives the “normalized” character to both the activity itself and the alienated nature of a person’s being, turning into a kind of “tool” for implementing the norm (Anisimov, 2000). On the other hand, overcoming his/her alienation, that is, building a personalized connection with an objective norm, a person acquires the qualities of a subject. What is the norm when we talk about the personality of the teacher, his/her personal self-determination? And is “norm” possible in this case as something static, uniquely defined and unshakable? Of course not. In itself, the concept of the norm is dynamic. Moreover, in the dynamic, changing environment of modern society and education, the very notion of the norm is constantly being reviewed, updated, supplemented and refined. That is, to formulate a “personal” norm of a teacher is possible only tentatively, inaccurately and, again, dynamically, reflecting the requirement of constant development: a developing, self-determined, mature, self-organized personality, self-actualizing, capable and ready for self-education and self-development throughout life, reaching the highest levels of self-regulation – self-determination, reaching the highest level of psychological health, personally competent, etc.). Thus, in the practice of accompanying it is necessary to actualize the question of the objective “personal” norm of the

teacher, that is, to put it simply, the question of what should be the personality of the modern teacher, which can be implemented both on the content of individual academic disciplines and in relative independence from them.

The components of the objective part of the activity include: “source material”, transformation space, transformation of material into a product, means and methods of obtaining a product. The components of the subjective part of the activity include: reflexive abilities, reflective support of the activity, motivation of the “movement” to the norm, etc. (Peterson & Kubysheva, 2016). It seems that as a source material, one can consider the current level of personality development in the relationship of its integrative (self-awareness, orientation) and expressive-instrumental (ability, character) properties. Evaluation of the current level of development is carried out on the basis of the reflective abilities of the student, namely, on the basis of cognitive, critical and design functions of reflective thinking according to Hegel (Anisimov, 2000). Comparing the current level of development with the personal norm of the teacher starts the process of personalization for the norm, contributes to the formation (or actualization) of the need for self-determination and motivates the student to achieve a personalized personal norm. Thus, in the practice of accompanying it is necessary to “equip” the student with means of reflection and evaluation, design.

The transformation space is the educational context and the student’s activities in this context, but not only educational, but also quasi-professional and, locally (for example, during the practice), professional. In the transformation space, the original material is actually transformed into the desired product of activity, i.e. into an already personalized norm (specification of the personality’s perceptions of the potential level for their development), as well as the movement of the individual to achieve this norm (potential level of development). The student’s “strength test” in the activity provides empirical material necessary to reflect and assess the current level of development, further personalization of the personal norm, design and correction of their actions aimed at achieving it. Thus, in the practice of accompanying it is necessary to designate objective opportunities for self-determination in the educational context (in educational, quasi-professional, professional activities), the real provision of these opportunities in different activities, including through assistance in building a program of action and methodical provision of professional and social-communicative samples, evaluation of their effectiveness.

Discussions

Despite its “instrumental” character, the individual development trajectory is “primary” in its role, as it (or rather the task set before the student to develop it) actualizes the process of personal self-determination, that is, a number of questions addressed to him/herself: Who am I? What am I? Who I want to be? What do I

want to be? How do I see my future? What competencies (including knowledge, skills) do I need to master? What do I need to do for that? What can I really do? What obstacles can I face? What resources do I have? and etc. Such questions prepare the necessary “soil” for purposeful, conscious, meaningful self-determination and choice and, more broadly, “self-building” (Shchedrovitsky, 1995) by pupils (and in our case, students) of their personalities in the activity process. At the same time, the question of the status of an individual development trajectory is open: to consider it as part of an individual educational trajectory or as a relatively independent “tool”? In the framework of this study, we did not delve into the discussion on this issue. We were interested in another: what are the possibilities of “using” the individual trajectory as a means of personal self-determination in an activity, regardless of its status. We believe that the discussion on the status of the individual development trajectory will be the immediate prospect of research.

Conclusion

Thus, vocational education is the most important context of personal self-determination of a future teacher, acquiring priority in conditions of variability and uncertainty. The active nature of personal self-determination identifies the need for pedagogical support of this process. Considering the accompaniment as a mechanism of socio-cultural mediation of personal self-determination, we turn to the construct of the “individual development trajectory” by which we understand a kind of “path” of personal development of the future teacher, which is formed during the student’s educational, quasi-professional and professional activities. The accompaniment procedure, the approximate description of which is presented in this article, is built through the “use” of the individual trajectory of development in the logic of the system-activity approach and general theory of activity. As a result, we have a number of crucial opportunities: to objectify the process of personal self-determination in educational and other activities (in general, in an educational context); to develop a specific escort toolkit using the potential of pedagogical and psychological methods and means; to highlight basic plans for the analysis of personal self-determination and develop appropriate procedures, methods, tools and evaluation criteria, etc. The perspective of our research will be the questions of further detailing the procedure of maintenance and equipping it with specific psychological and educational tools.

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