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Media Content as a Tool for the Development of the Reflexivity of a Future Teacher in Special and Inclusive Education

Nadia Sh. Tjurina*

*Moscow City University, 129226, Moscow (Russia), 4 Vtoroy Selskhoziajstvenny proezd,
tjurinaNSH@mgpu.ru*

Abstract

The relevance of the study of this problem is determined by both the institutionalization of the idea of inclusive education and the unpreparedness of the professional community to work in new conditions where children with different psychophysical and social-emotional development levels study together with ordinary peers. Such a situation sets special requirements for the level of professional competence of teachers. Studies have offered the concept of inclusive competence of the teacher. This concept includes contextual (motivational, cognitive, reflexive) and key operational competencies of a future teacher in the field of special and inclusive education. The ability of a special educator in pedagogical reflection will contribute to the individualization of correctional and pedagogical activities and the optimization of communication with subjects of professional activity.

This article, therefore, is focused on the study of such a psychological phenomenon affecting future special teachers, along with exploring the possibilities of using fiction media content as a tool for developing pedagogical reflexivity.

The leading method in the study of this problem is the survey method conducted among 63 students of the "Special (defectological) education" discipline, which helped to identify the prevalence of the formation of pedagogical reflection among 53% of participants at a medium or low level (32%).

The article explains the concept of inclusive competence of a teacher in terms of its significant component - reflexivity; also, the reasoning behind the inclusion of this phenomenon in its structure is provided, and art media content is suggested to be considered as the tool for pedagogical reflexivity formation. The author proposes to discuss a potential concept of media education for educators of the system of special and inclusive education.

The materials provided in the article allow adjusting the content and methods of personnel training for the system of special and inclusive education following the Paris program of media education and recent studies in this field.

Keywords: reflection, special teacher, inclusive education, media content.

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* Corresponding author. E-mail: tjurinaNSH@mgpu.ru

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Introduction

The modern vector of development of educational policy and practice in Russia focused on the institutionalization of inclusive education as a systemic innovation. Since the beginning of 2000, experimental platforms for testing and implementing the experience of joint pre-school and school education for children with disabilities have launched. The adoption of a new law on education in Russia in 2012 establishes the right for equal access to qualitative education for students with disabilities. The current stage of inclusion development in the Russian Federation targeted on creating conditions that will meet the special education requirements of students of all levels of the educational vertical: from preschool to vocational education.

Changes in public and professional consciousness are aimed at overcoming stereotypes about the necessity of excluding persons with atypical development from general education and creating special educational conditions for them. The tendency to recognize the dignity of the Other as an equal participant in all aspects of life must impose special requirements on the personality of the teacher. The readiness of a teacher to recognize the Other, to accept another reality as legitimate, is determined by the level of his professional competence (Tjurina, 2014).

Purpose and objectives of the study

The purpose of the study is an experimental study of the problem of the formation of reflexivity in students of future teachers of the inclusive and special education system.

Literature review

Today, pedagogical science still has no unified approach to the definition of professional competence. According to Slavenin (2003) the professional competence of a teacher represents the unity of their theoretical and practical readiness to implement pedagogical activities. The researchers identify a number of competencies that a graduate teacher should have. One of the most important components of the professional competence of a teacher is their social and personal competence (Zimnyaya, 2009), which

relates to the interaction of man and the social sphere, and the competence related to the individual as a subject of activity, communication.

Linkages with the actual needs of in-life pedagogical practice are taking the research of pedagogical competence to a new level. The concept of "inclusive competence of a teacher" emerges today (Khafizullina, 2008; etc.). According to Khafizullina (2008), the inclusive competence of a teacher is "an integrative personal education that determines the ability of teachers to perform professional functions in the process of inclusive education, considering the different educational requirements of students and ensuring the involvement of children with disabilities in the environment of an educational organization and creating conditions for their development and self-development" (Khafizullina 2008). According to the researcher, the structure of inclusive teacher competences consists of key contextual (motivational, cognitive, reflexive) and key operational competencies that can be considered as constituent parts of inclusive competencies of a teacher.

Summarizing the methods of analyzing general professional competence of educators and inclusive competency, the following can be identified as the most relevant competencies in the context of the teacher's work in inclusive education:

- competencies in the field of values and meaning orientation in the world: recognition of the unconditional worth of life; recognition of the other, atypical development as legitimate;
- citizenship competencies: awareness and observance of the rights and obligations of the citizen; awareness of personal dignity, civic position and duty;
- competencies for self-improvement, self-regulation, self-development, personal and professional reflection;
- social interaction competencies: partnership, respect and acceptance of the other, social mobility, recognition of the legitimacy of alternative means of communication (Zimnyaya, 2009).

The detachment of reflexive competence as an independent unit is conditioned by the importance of this psychological phenomenon in the context of the formation of a personalized paradigm of education, in which the establishment of subjective relations in various dyads (triads) is the value reference point.

In the structure of the inclusive competency of an educator, reflection indicates the level of development and adequacy of their self-esteem, self-consciousness, and perception of themselves as responsible for the efficiency of pedagogical actions. Conscious control over their performance, personal achievement, ability

to initiate and maintain partnerships, improvisation, and prediction of behavioral efficiency are all manifestations of reflection.

The studies of Petrovsky (2008), which consider reflexivity as one of the fundamental attributes of competency, allow invoking to this component reasonably. The research of the problem of self-reflection in human psychic activity is directly related to the person's ability to assess the scale and speed of changes in the external world, as well as the person's awareness of the completeness of the information (Kovaleva, 2017). In psychological and pedagogical studies, self-reflection considered in terms of activity theory (Leontiev, 1975; etc.), where the reflective competence of a teacher contributes to the formation of pedagogical creativity and skill. The second approach considers the phenomenon of self-reflection as a meaning-formative element of human activity in the context of the theory of spiritual consciousness and self-consciousness (Zinchenko, 1991). The first research approach is focused on the consideration of self-reflection as an external act of thought process, while in the second case it is an internal one, which allows a person to explore his or her world order, define the boundaries of "I and Others", take the position of an observer of own life, and make an attempt to comprehend concrete phenomena of existence in terms of the worldview. The ratio of external and internal reflection promotes the formation of reflective pedagogical thinking.

In the context of this study, it appears important to observe the influence of self-reflection on the development of a person's creative abilities, as described in Stetsenko's research (2006). Klarin's (1997) work also demonstrates the correlation between the content of creative thinking and self-reflection, which allows comprehending the existing subjective experience through making inferences, generalizations, analogies, comparisons, and estimations, as well as experiencing, remembering, and solving problems by the subject of pedagogical activity. It also includes appealing to convictions for interpretation, analysis, action, discussion, or evaluation (Klarin, 1997). It is important to notice that the ability to self-reflection motivates the individual to creative self-realization, based on an awareness of their worldviews, in which they highlight their own vision of the actual problem.

Foreign researchers also mention the importance of reflexivity and self-reflection for teachers of educational systems with special requirements. For example, Robyn Bentley-Williams and Jennifer Morgan (2013) found that learning through self-reflection is a key strategy for preparing teachers for inclusive education. A supportive learning environment is an environment in which participants' reflection on their awareness of learners' diverse educational and social requirements plays a significant role. This approach to pedagogical education makes a change in the professional mindset of educators from simple recognition of human diversity to the commitment and ethical decision-making towards inclusion.

Taking into account the importance of this psychological phenomenon for the individual development of an individual or teacher, we suggest that in the context of establishing a special teacher's readiness to work with atypical development and its originality in all processes of life, self-reflection is one of the significant competencies. Its presence in a special educator will contribute to the individualization of correctional and pedagogical activities and optimization of contact with subjects of professional activity.

Methodology

The reflection of the teaching and training process of future special educators has stimulated research interest in the aspect of studying the problem of reflexivity in this category of learners. In the domestic pedagogical theory and practice of studying the level of reflexivity, the following diagnostic methods are most common: the psychodiagnostic method of determining the individual measure of reflexivity (Karpov, 2003); the method of Anisimov (2007) directed at studying the reflexivity of thinking, the level of self-criticism and the level of collectivity; and the methodology of studying the pedagogical reflexivity by Kalashnikova (1999). The questionnaire "Determining the Level of Formation of Pedagogical Reflection" (Kalashnikova, 1999) was used for this research. The choice of this set of tools conditioned by the technological feasibility of processing the received data on the one hand, and the possibility of immersion of respondents into the reflexive position during the test. The choice of this set of tools is conditioned by the technological feasibility of processing the received data on the one hand, and the possibility of immersion of respondents into the reflexive position during the test.

In the framework of the elective module "The Image of the Other in the World Cinematography", 63 students of the 3rd and 4th years of study at the Institute of Special Education and Comprehensive Rehabilitation of the State Educational Institution of Higher Education of the Moscow State Pedagogical University were offered to respond to the survey questions.

Results

The quantitative analysis of the results of the questionnaire "Determining the Level of Formation of Pedagogical Reflection" has demonstrated that the medium level of formation of pedagogical reflection (53%) or low level (32%) prevails among students enrolled in the "Special (Defectological) Education" discipline; 15% of students demonstrated a high level of pedagogical reflection.

For students with a high level of reflection, it is typical to address the analysis of their behavior and the actions of others, to establish cause-effect relationships between their actions in the past, present, and future. Analysis, planning, and projection of own actions are common to them.

Students with a medium level of reflection tend to be less prepared for self-analysis in interaction with other people, and they periodically realize the necessity of self-education, self-analysis, and opportunities for its improvement in the course of professional activity.

The low level of reflexivity was defined by the lack of motivation for reflection of their behavior and activity, low awareness of the possibility of self-consciousness, and comprehension of oneself through other people. Students who demonstrate a high level of pedagogical reflection express personal interest and a positive attitude towards self-knowledge and self-development through the analysis of the interaction with other experiences. Furthermore, students with a high level of reflexivity have adequate self-esteem.

Discussions

The results of the experimental study have led to the conclusion that it is necessary to create special conditions or an environment in which the development of reflexive ability will proceed with maximum efficiency purposefully, which implies the focus on creating an environment with a certain value orientation. For the student in Special (Defectology) Education major, these values should be those of inclusive education and inclusive lifestyles.

Theoretical preconditions regarding the correlation between reflection, creative development, and self-development suggest that attracting artistic media content to the educational process would facilitate their professional growth. For this purpose, it is necessary to develop the concept of media education for future special educators.

The problem of media education for teachers in the Russian Federation addressed by many contemporaries. Fedorov (2013) is one of them, his concept of media education of future teachers methodologically based on the philosophical views about the "dialogue of cultures" Fedorov (2013) refers to the analysis of this concept in the context of media education, considering the potencies of modern media culture, which creates "unprecedented opportunities for the dialogue of cultures in the international (dialogue of cultures, nations, countries), interpersonal, and introverted (intra-personal) levels. Media education builds on the possibilities of "dialogue of cultures", which allows to avoid national isolation, to reach the level of comparison, comparative analysis of different didactic approaches in various countries of the world, and, consequently, to constantly improve the pedagogical theory and methodology" (Fedorov, 2013). The main stages of media education development in Russia have been analyzed in Chelysheva's studies (2002). In further research, the author suggests practical cases of media education practice with different groups: students of pedagogical majors, teenagers, parents, and others. (Chelischeva, 2006). Modern studies in the field of media education are based on the existing Russian experience of applying audiovisual and

integrated media education of schoolchildren during classes, which use display devices, radio, television, music, and press materials at school. The study by Kovaleva (2017) states that significant characteristics of personal development (including reflexive) in the context of media educational approaches are not subject to special studying. In turn, the author suggests that one of the efficient approaches towards studying and developing the ability to comprehend visual and non-verbal texts is reflexive-positional. This is about technology that contributes to the development of the ability to comprehend visual text and mainly the meaning, metaphorical meaning of its visual series, as well as the formation of a general culture of imaginative thinking and interpretation. (Kovaleva, 2017). A brief analysis of the research reveals that in the context of training of personnel for the system of special or inclusive education for people with disabilities, the problem of media education is not outlined, yet it is extremely topical.

Taking as a starting point the basic principles of the Paris Agenda or 12 Recommendations for Media Education as an initial discussion, the following components of the concept of media education of future special educators can be suggested:

- providing access to all types of media that are potential tools for comprehending all aspects of the functioning of persons with disabilities in society as well as their social environment;
- development of capabilities for critical analysis of media content, taking into account aspects of the functioning of persons with disabilities in society as well as their social environment;
- encouraging creativity and interactivity in various fields of media communication, taking into account aspects of the functioning of persons with disabilities in society as well as their social environment (Paris Agenda or 12 Recommendations for Media Education, 2007).

The structure of content units of the proposed concept should, among other things, take into account the development of pedagogical reflection of the future teacher of special and inclusive education. If media theory is examined through the prism of their integrality or the "theory of total media", media content may include any means and channels of communication "that serve to exchange information between the subjects of this communication, and by means and channels of communication, we mean any content carriers, including natural and artificial transmitters in verbal and non-verbal forms. These are works of art in the form of a book, sculpture, painting, film, advertising in all its manifestations, television or radio shows, newspaper or magazine articles, a public speech, an official document, postcard, encrypted message, SMS, the multimedia text of online media" (Zhilavskaya, 2018).

Immersion into the thematic problematic media environment would provide students with an opportunity to analyze their "ego" based on the basis of thinking that takes place through the perception of another person's thoughts and reflection related to emotion, inner experience, and feeling. Hence, the development of reflection will play an important role in the development of the media competency of a special teacher, on the one hand, and the formation of a professional worldview, on the other.

Conclusion

Media content, which implies thematic fiction and documentaries, literature, websites, audio and video podcasts, theatre, can be used to develop the reflexivity of future special and inclusive education teachers, thereby enabling them:

- immerse in a unified value environment;
- analyze own attitude towards the problem of atypical development;
- familiarize themselves with alternative viewpoints, assessments and feelings;
- to form a professional community;
- to transmit an adequate position to a wide social context, etc.

Immersing students in the thematic media environment naturally stimulates the subsequent reflection of their own experiences in essays, reviews, and group discussions. This approach invokes the students' emotional sphere and stimulates their ability to analyze own feelings, thoughts, desires, and values. The role of the teacher also changes: in such a situation, they act as a facilitator of students' activity, facilitating the search for new meanings and viewpoints. The combination of practical and theoretical studies allows creating a development environment in which students acquire praxeological and cognitive competencies through value-based comprehension of new experiences. Such comprehension of reality stimulates their further activity and desire to be involved in significant social changes.

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