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DB Yakubjanova
Tashkent State Pedagogical
University named after
Nizami.

Studying the professional direction in future Defectologists

DB Yakubjanova

Abstract

The article deals with the topical task of studying the professional direction in future defectologists, who should be able to fit the requirements of the educational specialist's modern professional activity. Applying the method of scientific-literature analysis, the author gives proof of a set of requirements imposed on the results of education as well as on the personality of a pedagogue-defectologist. Characteristics of a pedagogue-defectologist's professional features are described in the article. The author identifies and substantiates the adequate style of pedagogic activity, which may be helpful in identifying the style of a future specialist's pedagogic activity.

Keywords: professional direction, future, Defectologists

1. Introduction

The need to study the professional direction in future defectologists is conditional on the integration processes unfolding in today's world as a whole and in the field of education in particular. The past few years have seen a series of studies, where an attempt was made to throw light on both the essence and the structure of professionalism in pedagogic activity. In some cases, the sign of equality is put between the notions "professionalism" and "mastery", while in other cases, it is a certain level of mastery that is called "professionalism". This notion is put on a par with "self-education" and "auto-education", it is often considered to be an independent category, generalizing the outcome of creative pedagogic activity.

According to A.K. Markova, the person's professionalism is not only the achievement of some high professional results, or the mere labour productivity, but, undoubtedly, the presence of psychological components – the person's inherent attitude to labour, the state of his mental qualities^[5].

Pedagogic activity presupposes the presence of some groups of personal characteristics, which are subservient to its efficient fulfillment. The level of development of the person's mental processes and personal qualities is revealed in the outcome of his professional activity. The influence exerted on the person by his professional activity has been theoretically proved and substantiated in practice by a number of researchers, including B.G. Ananjev, A.N. Leontjev, B.F. Lomov, B.M. Teplov, S.L. Rubinstein and others. One should agree with A.N. Leontjev, who posits that "activity" is not a reaction or a whole complex of reactions, but it is a system with its own structure, internal transitions and transformations and its own development^[4].

The possibility to absorb knowledge, to learn to think and analyze provided to students is aimed at a new pedagogical philosophy: to be able to take active-personal part in tackling professional tasks on the basis of high intellectual competence.

When analyzing the defectologist's professional activity, professionalism, in our opinion, should be viewed not only as a capacity, in the first place, to become proficient in the latest educational technologies, various means and pedagogic innovations. It is also necessary to take into account a moving force behind the specialist's aspiration to advance in a given profession; the values, on which this aspiration is based, for what sake he devotes himself to this line of activity; and what inner resources are invested in this work on a voluntary basis or of his own accord.

Correspondence
DB Yakubjanova
Tashkent State Pedagogical
University named after
Nizami.

Pedagogic professionalism denotes a set of personal characteristics, which, taken together, ensure a high level of self-organization of the person's professional pedagogic activity. The first group includes the following ingredients: the humanistic direction, professional knowledge and skills, pedagogic abilities and pedagogic technique.

The second group of ingredients that form pedagogic professionalism encompasses didactic, organizational, structural and communicative skills, technological ways of imposing requirements, regulating the pedagogic intercourse, arranging collective creative work and so forth [7].

Professionalism presupposes the presence of a complex of potentially high abilities: academic, research, creative, cognitive, social (managerial) and emotional ones (N.F. Gorchakova).

These days, the abilities are regarded as a special psychological quality of a functioning system, which expresses itself in a certain level of productivity, characterized by precision, reliability and the speed of functioning [9].

In that way, we can conclude the following: the process of a defectologist's professional development is characterized by the ability to overstep the limits of routine in his pedagogic practice and to see his professional work at large. This enables the defectologist to become the master of the situation, a competent designer of his own potential. What's more, this ability allows him to inwardly accept, comprehend and estimate all the difficulties and contradictions that strew the pedagogic process, to cope with them independently and constructively in compliance with his own values and orientation and to consider the difficulties as a stimulus for a further creative development. The prospects of personal and professional growth stimulate the defectologist to go on conducting experiment after experiment, which is treated as a search, creativity and a possibility of choice.

The present-day pedagogic and psychological science offers various systems of professional training for defectologists, with a bachelor's degree and a number of other factors being taken into consideration. To prepare such a large amount of academic programs, which would cover a majority of these systems, is next to impossible. However, offering two or three versions with a basic component that stipulates a given approach is quite possible.

Just this sort of basis is provided by the new curricula recently introduced at the Pedagogic University, which take into account the national educational standards and envisage the provision in their special courses, selectable subjects and additional occupations of ample opportunity for diversifying, enriching knowledge, and allowing for demands and interests of a group of students or separate students.

The implementation of standards will make it possible to form in future specialists several essential professional qualities, including individual-oriented ones, which are indispensable in performing general pedagogic functions.

At the pedagogic higher educational establishment, different forms of individualized teaching-and-educational work are used. To begin with, these are conventional university forms of work: the frontal work (lectures, seminars); the group work (practical and laboratory assignments) and the individual-oriented work (individual work, discussions, consultations etc.).

There is also a mixed form of all these activities, the so-called adaptive system of education, which doesn't affect the content of teaching. At the same time, a lion's share of

school hours is devoted to individual work.

The positive elements of a given system are as follows:

- A natural (justified and motivated) increase in the share of independent work in lecture halls;
- A reduction of the share of home work;
- Work in pairs (static and dynamic pairs, mixed pairs);
- Individual work with students;
- Network planning;
- A schedule of operational personal records.

The fact that students, without changing the content or influencing it in any way, may pay more attention to the fulfillment of one or another assignment, rather than to some developing motives of the material studied, can be regarded as a shortcoming of a given system.

As well as that, the students, irrespective of their abilities and a proficiency degree, accomplish one and the same types of work, which is also not entirely correct, from the standpoint of pedagogic technology. Frequently a procedure for their fulfillment is determined by students themselves, which often leads to the infringement of the very logic behind the presentation and learning of material.

It is well known that in today's environment, the goal of education is to form a high level of general culture, to satisfy a person's educational needs as well as to create conditions for his self-development and self-determination. In this case, the teacher's task is not reduced to a mere transfer of new knowledge; he directly forms the route for students' actions in their independent individual work. If out-of-class studies were earlier viewed as secondary or auxiliary ones, currently it is necessary to treat them as the main forms of the educational process, which are central to the formation of abilities and skills of creative activity and self-education in students.

In this connection, there naturally arises a question about the character of inter-session control over the quality of a student's studies. It is common knowledge that the importance of control, first and foremost, lies in the fact that it disciplines a student, shapes the sense of duty, persistence and responsibility in achieving his goals, as well as teaches him systematic educational work. On the one hand, control determines a student's proficiency level, and on the other, it evaluates the quality of the teaching-and-educational process. Determining the successes and failures, as well as their reasons, one may be able to adapt the pedagogic system quickly enough.

Many things in the organization of individual work are common for all higher educational establishments. These include the following types of activities:

- The writing of papers, essays, tests, academic-year and graduate works, individual discussions for seminars and laboratory-practical classes; the preparation of academic-year and graduate works is supervised by leading pedagogues from different chairs (it is worth mentioning that the number of diploma projects presented and defended at the faculty tends to increase year in, year out);
- Discussions and consultations are held with students (though their quality is insufficient), during which their studies and the most difficult themes are discussed; students are provided with lists of literature, with independent analysis of all books being planned; the individuality of students is carefully taken into account when it comes to the questions of re-examination, sending down and job placement;

- Students studying in accordance with an individual schedule (employed or sick students, as well as those involved in external studies) have a person-oriented plan of lectures, consultations, examinations and semester tests; a student's personal choice, depending on the situation, determines his additional specialization, transfer from the day tuition to the tuition by correspondence and vice versa;
- Inter-session attestation should be held regularly on all subjects; it constitutes a universal mechanism of control over the progress in studies made by students, independent and individual work; receiving gain scores for their work during a semester, the students escape the emotional-psychological overwork usually associated with examinations; in addition, inter-session attestation allows to significantly relieve the period of examinations, which, without doubt, is in line with the requirements of national educational standards;
- The program of pedagogic practice also implies the realization of an individual approach to students – pedagogic practice is held under an individual plan; individual plans are also used at a time of preparation for test lessons or formulation of individual assignments of experimental character;
- Professional training of future specialists at the institute of higher education aims to provide each student with all necessary conditions for the maximum development of his abilities, preferences and interests. And the main resource for the achievement of this target is the learning by students of education's basic content.

So, it is necessary to create such a training-educational environment, in which future specialists will be able to fully develop their abilities, propensities and creative potential, to realize their needs and interests, i.e. to create a training-educational environment as a space for a student's intensive professional growth.

Determining the adequate style of pedagogic activity, the "Orientation Questionnaire" technique, worked out by V. Smekala and M. Kuchera, helps to identify the style of pedagogic activity.

A given technique can be described as follows. A student's reaction on the requirements associated with his future profession, as well as on requirements imposed on colleagues depends on the kind of satisfaction (remuneration) he expects to derive from his work. On the other hand, depending on what gives him the sense of satisfaction, there are 3 types of expectations that exclude each other in most cases:

1. To do and complete work;
2. To establish mutual understanding with colleagues;
3. To derive self-satisfaction.

Such a three-prong classification is based on the theory of inter-personal relations in organizations. As a result of long studies, a given theory has led to the elaboration, perfection and definition of a method to estimate the basic life-orientation.

According to the Orientation Questionnaire, a tested person is given three marks:

"S" denotes "self-direction". This mark reflects the extent, to which the tested person describes himself as a person, who expects the direct satisfaction (remuneration) only for himself, irrespective of both the work he performs and his colleagues.

For him, a working team is literally a "theatre", where it is

possible to satisfy his own (personal) needs. He perceives other members of the team only as spectators, before whom the tested person can demonstrate his own personal difficulties, respect requirement, the wish for ruling and suchlike.

As a rule, the "S"-labeled person is despised by his colleagues, because he is introspective and dominating, and doesn't respond to any needs of his associates.

"I" stands for the direction to mutual actions. This direction reflects the intensity, with which the tested person seeks to maintain good, harmonious relations, which often makes it difficult for him to fulfill certain work tasks.

A person with such direction displays a great deal of interest for collective activity, but at the same time, he, under no circumstances, facilitates the successful fulfillment of a training task by the team.

"T" stands for "direction to task". Such direction reflects the intensity, with which the tested person devotes himself to the fulfillment of his tasks and problem-solution actions, as well as his interest in how to fulfill his work in the most scrupulous manner. Notwithstanding his interest for work, the person of this category seeks to cooperate with his colleagues, for the team to be as productive as possible.

As part of a team, the "T"-labeled person aspires, with all his strength, to prove his point of view, which he considers to be correct and useful for the fulfillment of a certain task.

The results of studies among students of a higher pedagogical school (V.A. Yakunin, E.I. Stepanova) vividly showed that the strongly self-directed persons tended to be characterized, in keeping with the Questionnaire referred to above, as unpleasant, aggressive, dogmatic, sensitive, introversive, suspicious, jealous, excitable, unstable, conservative, diffident etc.

Quite the contrary, the persons directed to mutual actions tended to be characterized as friendly, team-dependant, uninspired, dreaming about the care, kindness, warmth etc.

The study at a higher educational establishment opens up possibilities for the formation of professional direction in students, in other words, for the development of those mental abilities and qualities, which appear to be the objects of social and professional actions under given conditions.

Such actions comprise the adequate selection of professional preferences and socio-psychological pre-requisites for the style of pedagogic activity.

For students-future defectologists, membership of certain fields of professional activity is particularly important, since it is conditional on the specificity of technological training that demands the active involvement in various lines of activity (pedagogic, production-technological, planning etc.).

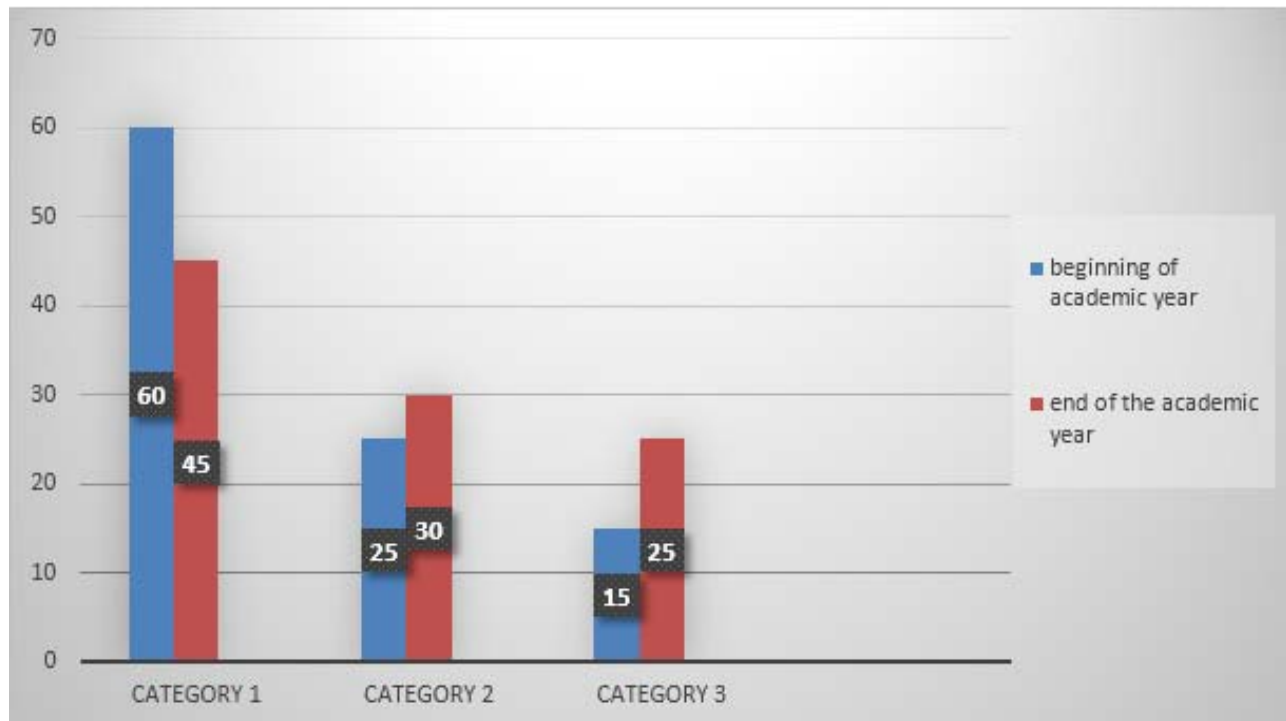


Fig 1: Direction types of the style of pedagogic activity

Table 1: Direction types ratio (%)

| Period | S | I | T |
|--------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| At the beginning of experiment | 60% | 25% | 15% |
| At the end of experiment | 45% | 30% | 25% |

Thus, analyzing the empirical data compiled during the experiment, we can ascertain that at the beginning of the experiment a given group of tested persons included:

- Those with the direction to themselves in pedagogic activity-60 per cent;
- Those with the direction to interaction-25 per cent;
- Those with the direction to task fulfillment-5 per cent.

At the end of the experiment, we observe that the types of direction among the tested persons tend to become equal (40 per cent, 30 per cent and 25 per cent), which characterizes the positivity in the style of pedagogic activity that is taking shape these days. It can be explained by the fact that in pedagogic activity, the direction to teamwork in tackling joint tasks is indispensable.

In the course of theoretical analysis, we specify the following tasks that affect the development of professional direction in future defectologists:

- Diagnosis of individual peculiarities in future defectologists;
- Realization by the student of the need to independently develop his individuality as the goal of professional education.

Having identified the individual peculiarities of future specialists-defectologists on the basis of the empirical data compiled during the experiment, we have come to the conclusion that the development of professional direction in future defectologists reflects the presence of inherent individual types of professional preferences and the distinct manifestation of the individual style of pedagogic activity.

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