



Psychology of education

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Confidence in the Professional Competence Structure of a Teacher

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This article is dedicated to one of the most important characteristics of teacher's professional competence – the analysis of its communicative sphere. They suggest that pedagogical communication is the basis of professional competence.

The analysis of works related to the problem of pedagogical communication and teacher's pedagogical interaction permitted to establish generally accepted criteria of teacher's communicative competence in pedagogical psychology. The authors show that, these generally accepted criteria of the communicative competence are correlated with the system of teacher's confidential relations. After discovering these interrelations, the authors built empirical model of communicative competence, teachers' level of the credibility towards themselves and the level of trust to the Others are the foundations of this model. It is shown, that the distinguishing features of teacher's communicative behavior depend on particularities of the teacher's deformation of the confidential relations, and this is the particularity that must be corrected in order to improve teacher's professional and communicative competence.

Key words: pedagogical communication, pedagogical interaction, communicative competence, professional competence, confidence, confidential relations, credibility, trust to the Others.

Pedagogical communication is the basis of the professional activity of a teacher and the effectiveness of his pedagogical work depends on the fact, how competent he will form this communication as its initiator.

Interaction is considered psychologically competent, if it is constructed according to subject – subject scheme. Just it allows both to use the inner resources of the partners with proper completeness and to achieve optimum effect of co-operation in any aspect of joint activity, including that one between a teacher and a student. Notion “communication” and notion “communicative activity” are used by a number of authors as synonyms. Such identification is stipulated by that circumstance, that the authors, engaging in working out communication problems, consider communication as an exchange of thoughts, feelings, actions and so on (1, 5, 10, 11 and others). Lately there began to appear the works, the authors of which object to such identification. In particular, M.S. Kagan considers, that communication is a process, the essence of which consists not simply in the fact of delivering and receiving information but in



working out “new information common for the communicating people and creating their community”, thus M.S. Kagan concludes, “communication creates a community and an exchange reserves the isolation of its participators”(4, p.149-150).

In this article the question will be about the interaction in the system “student – teacher” as about a management influence. As it is generally known, there are 2 ways of subordinating to another person: they are compulsion and authoritativeness. In case of a management activity the question is about subordination and management, and in case of pedagogical activity it is about knowledge transmission. Nevertheless common bases are available. The hypothesis is that if there is a confidence between the interacting subjects, it creates the basis for authoritativeness, if there is not, then compulsion and sanctions become a management mechanism.

Subject – subject paradigm of pedagogical interaction, which has been written so much about, implies besides transmission of information insertion in the process of interaction some specific attitude to those, whom teaching influence is addressed to. Specific character of this attitude consists in the attitude to another person as to a subject, as to a personality. But what means to treat another person as a personality? Many authors true consider that such attitude first and foremost implies admission in another person his own subjectiveness, his own inner world. In other words no matter how close or far the relations between the interacting subjects would be, they both are autonomous, sovereign subjects of activity. And to treat another person personally orientated means to admit his right to be the same. Just that very admission orientates not to monologue pedagogical influence, but to a true dialogue communication between a teacher and students.

Proceeding from the all mentioned it becomes clear that the confidence existing between the interacting individuals makes the connection between them subjectlike, deeply dialoguelike. To confirm the already mentioned let us once more revert to the work by M.S. Kagan, where it is said, “As the aim of communication is to accustom one subject to another, to organize their joint actions or to find their spiritual community, so long as each partner must reveal to another person his real nature, intentions, possibilities, aims, aspirations, ideals, so that another person, knowing all these, will be able to co-ordinate his actions with those of his partner ...” (in the same place, p. 161). Thus during the process of communication not only and even not so much the process of information transmission occurs as the mutual assumption of the influence on each other provided the interacting subjects treat each other as autonomous, sovereign subjects of activity that is as a value.

However the pedagogical interaction process implies the relations of subordination and authoritativeness, therefore the relations of confidence here will be formed differently, and its manifestations will have particular phenomenological characteristics. Otherwise it is impossible to understand what reality the question is about, when it is said about confidence as about a condition of a teacher’s authoritativeness. It is known from psychological investigations, that students’ confidence to their teacher will be a condition of a true authority including a teacher’s authority (2, 7, 8, 9, 11, 14, 15).



In our opinion the phenomenology of confidentiality in authoritative relations will be determined by the unequal social-psychological status of the interacting subjects. However this fact cannot mean that students will trust an authoritative teacher, and the teacher will not trust his subordinates. The relations of a true confidence imply a true mutuality. Proceeding only from these promises it becomes clear that authoritative relations mean first and foremost personal orientated relations of the interacting and communicating with each other subjects and that implies treating another person as a value. Therefore confidence is always a valuable attitude to another one's personality.

Proceeding from the conception, that we are developing, the following bases are laid in the authoritativeness relations: one of the interacting partners (a teacher) in equal measure treats himself and another person as a value, but for the latter (a student) the former is a value of a higher degree than he himself. In other words sometimes the latter trusts (relies on the opinion of another person in our case a teacher) the former in some aspects of vital activity more than him self. If this condition is not observed, that is a teacher cannot treat a student as a value equivalent him, then the interaction result will be subordination and application of authoritative powers, but not a true authoritativeness. The result of an equal correlation of valuable positions will be authoritativeness, creating an influence on that one, who trusts another person more than himself.

Thus the valuable attitude to a student's personality first and foremost implies treating him as a personality, as a person who is still developing, a person who can and knows not everything yet, but potentially he can and therefore he is worthy of all that a person can and deserves. That is why the valuable attitude to students implies confidence to a personal orientated "incompleteness and positive virtuality" (15). If to operationalize the all mentioned then as a matter of fact in the pedagogical process confidence to students is based on predicting their possible development, that is as if an orientation on "a zone of the nearest development" of every student. Therefore psychological confidence is formed on the basis of consideration for another person's positive possibilities.

This circumstance is especially important for pedagogical interaction because this position with reference to students makes pedagogical process really developing. From the other hand only this position of a teacher gives the last possibility to fell autonomous independent subjects of activity, that is, it allows to treat themselves as a value or, in other words, trust themselves. So, the analysis of confidence – personal interaction in the system "teacher – student" shows that confidence in student's personality as a autonomous sovereign subject of activity and as a subject of development furthers the formation of corresponding position with students with reference to themselves.

In this context we have a problem of study how the teacher's confidence to himself has been formed. And the level of the teacher's confidence to himself can be one of the indices of his professional – communicative competence. Only a teacher who



trusts himself and thinks of himself as a self – valuable person can form his students' valuable attitude to himself. In this case the personality - developing task of a teacher will be his aspiration to form the confidence of every student to himself as an independent autonomous subject of the constructive activity. Thus, in spite of defects and deformations of personal development of some students the teacher must proceed not from his emotional reactions but he must direct his attention to "a zone of the nearest development" of every student's individual abilities.

Such inner psychological position of a teacher who directs his attention to the development of every student's potential positive abilities, which are practically boundless, will be an optimal way of displaying confidence to students, to their personality; it will be the way which stimulates individual development of students. So the formation of the students' confidence to themselves is possible only by means of confidence display to potential abilities and opportunities of every student from the side of the teacher. It will be the principal form of displaying the teacher's confidence to students. It is the way allowing a student not to be just obedient, to do instructions of teachers and parents punctually, for it is well – known that obedience and even progress in studies are not a direct correlate of individual development. It is necessary to find ways and strategies which allow students to form their own psychological position with reference to themselves as an autonomous independent subject of creative activity.

Proceeding from the all mentioned we consider that the problem of interaction in the system of the increase of psychological competence of a teacher as far as exactly a teacher is an active element of the system "teacher – student", he exactly must be an initiator of structural interaction. That's why the ability to make confiding atmosphere, to trust every student, his possible virtual abilities and potentialities is the most important criterion of the professional competence of a teacher.

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