The Theory and Methods of Students’ Intellectual Self-Development

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Abstract: The problems facing such a branch of acmeological psychology as the psychology of self-development reflect common problems of the contemporary national psychology. They reside in the necessity to raise more determinately the problem of specificity and social expectations related to both the theoretical and the practical psychology. It has been proved that the package of measures of a psychologist results in a considerable shift from the external motivation to be engaged in some occupation to the internal motivation, which moves material benefits into background and diminishes their role in the value system of a student being a self-developing personality.

Key words: Development · Self-development · Creativity · Intellectual and activity-based mechanism · Psychological pendulum · Introception · Personality

INTRODUCTION

As we understand it, the specificity of theoretical psychology resides in the detailed comprehension of the internal world of a human accompanied by its strongest differentiation into all of the components, which are represented in the general psychology (processes and their particularization; emotional-volitional characteristics and states; individual and typological manifestations of the personality; etc.). Ultimately, any theoretician aims to create a dummy image of a studied phenomenon accompanied by certain laboratory tests. It must be confessed that there are little social expectations from the new theoretical studies in the area of in-depth processes of mentality.

The specificity of the applied (practical) psychology resides in following the second part of the philosophical died-contemplation and transformation – namely in transformation of either the situation or the object (the external world), or self-transformation and self-development of the person himself.

As a result of self-transformation, the true self-development of a human takes place. As a rule, not only the part of the mentality changes, which the human has been thinking not sufficiently developed or distorted, but also the human himself changes. The process of self-transformation most usually involves not only particular abilities, states, properties, but also the whole human, the personality.

The main problem of scientific coverage of the self-development psychology resides in the extent, in which it is possible to overcome the contradiction between the practice of transformation (self-transformation), which requires involving in this process the body of knowledge about the whole person being a biopsychological organization on the one hand and the existing theoretical knowledge of a psychologist who breaks down the mentality of the person into multiple sub-volumes on the other hand. Besides, the social expectations with respect to the psychologist are less related to the fact that he can create theoretical models of mentality and its components, but more to the transformation aspect of his activity. A psychologist must be able to help people: relieve stress, depression, overcome drug dependence and improve memory. This again raises the problem of social priorities of a psychologist. And there is an unambiguous answer about what must prevail in the psychologist's activity – theory or practice, contemplation or transformation. It is transformation and self-development.

The science believes the hypothetic way out of the confrontation (contradiction) resides in the possibility of joining these two elements through the systemic and structural approach to understanding of the human psychological structure. We suggest a comprehensive model of his psychological structure as a model of human self-development. The model involves the majority of the human mentality elements. Special attention is paid to the transformative nature of human activity, which when
The concept of psychological organization of human development suggested in this work is a synthesis of our theoretical vision and experimental workouts [1, 2] as well as the theoretical concepts relating to human psychology by S.L. Rubinstein [3, 4], A.V. Brushlinsky [5], A.L. Zhuravlev [6]; relating to the psychology of personality and development areas by V.M. Bekhterev [7], L.S. Vygotsky [8], A.N. Leontyev [9], A.V. Petrovsky [10]; relating to the psychology of creativity and thinking by A.V. Brushlinsky [11], D.B. Bogoyavlenskaya [12], Y.A. Ponomarev [13].

The vision of psychological organization of a human as a developing personality is based on the basic principles of systemic approach (B.F. Lomov [14]), namely: the system's static and dynamic properties; hierarchical collateral subordination of structures; temporal development and self-development of the system. The structure of psychological organization of a human is represented in the form of hierarchized elements (cognitive, regulative, communicative) and psychological mechanisms of activity, behavior and communication.

The structure of intellectual and activity-based self-development includes description of the spatial and temporal (cognitive) and determinative (regulative) systems [1, 2].

The cognitive system is represented by static and dynamic elements. The static elements are the products of human interaction with objects, phenomena and they exist in the form of perceptive, representative and conceptual images. The dynamic element is primarily represented by the processes of internal and external interaction, including all manifests of contemplation or transformation. We take the utmost form of the activity related to internal processes and consider them by stages in two alternative directions: the thinking and creative ones. In the thinking version, these stages are (according to the works by the followers of the S.L. Rubinstein's school): satiation ? problem ? hypothesis ? objectives ? summaries (judgments, conclusions). In the creativity stages according to the works by Y.A. Ponomarev, the stages are placed in the following sequence: satiation ? problem ? crash of logical programs ? incubation ? intuitive insight ? verbalization ? formalization. The difference between these two approaches resides in the different extent of the process awareness. All stages are conscious within the thinking approach and the incubation and intuitive insight stages are unconscious in the creative approach.

External processes start with reproduction, followed by the reproduction with improvisations stage. Then the creation stage takes place, which develops in the substantial and technological directions. The substantial direction answers the question "What has been created?" and the technological one answers the question "How has it been created?" In both directions, three levels of importance of the products of creation and technology can be distinguished. The creation products have the following levels of importance: creation for oneself (subjective creativity), creation for subculture, creation for culture (objective creativity).

In our earlier work (Popov, L.M., 1990), we introduced the concept of psychological pendulum in order to explain the processes of development and self-development. Based on the pendulum concept, "all processes taking place inside and outside a human are of oscillating and rhythmic nature". This manifests itself in the form of internal and external processes, which a human commits permanently. In our version, they are called intellectual and activity-based processes. At that, all these cases do not have anything absolutely primary or absolutely secondary, i.e. it is not determined what happens first: the motion from outside into inside or the motion from inside to outside. All disputes over this subject lead us to the insoluble philosophical problem of the material and the ideal.

Based on the idea of a psychological pendulum and the idea of L.S. Vygotsky about the children development, we came to the conclusion that the most important point in the development of a human and his self-development is the permanent expansion of the development areas: from the areas, which involve simple activity of the human (satiation, reproduction) to the areas of the utmost productivity. The ability of a human to progress unassistedly from the areas of the lowest development to the areas of the highest development along with being involved into other new branches of science and practice can be treated as his ability to self-development, which cannot reside in the separation of internal activity from the external activity.

Various manifests of internal determination act as the means that support the process of self-development: the strive to achieve certain values, conform to certain ideals, social expectations, the strive to be successful (in financial, public and political terms), etc. All this creates the state of permanent disturbance of balance, which a human as an ultimately active system tries to eliminate and which the psychology finally unites with the internal motivation concept.
According to V.I. Andreev [15], the optimal study process is the process, which is organized so that students have an opportunity to progress from the stage of development to the stage of self-development. In other words, from the stage of prevailing external motivation to the stage of prevailing internal motivation, with which students can initiate their transition from the areas of actual development to the areas of potential development. According to V. Stern, the process of transferring the externally assigned goals into the internal goals of a person is called introspection.

The Method of Tests Composing: The method is built as a creative activity of students aimed to compose psychological tests in the form of a questionnaire and intellectual projective tests by a single student or a group. In the course of handling tests at a study class, students generated certain vision of a test as an evaluation procedure for determination of certain abilities and qualities of a person.

The stage of treating a test as a tool of cognition is transferred in this method to the next stage – the stage of creating such a tool. Thus, a student needs to leave the reproduction area, the area of the test application and proceed to the area of the creation of an original test. Moreover, the list of conditions for the newly created test includes theoretical reasoning of the test, composition of a manual, creation of rating scales for rating the results and their verbal interpretation. The final procedure of this method comprises approbation of the test, its defense, i.e. verification of the adequacy of the idea to the created set of tasks. Finally, the value of the test is determined by an expert group consisting of the most skilled students, which recommends the test for publication in the Students Tests collection. Recently, the book with psychological tests by students has been released.

The Self-Interview Method: Self-Interview (L.M. Popov) is a method of in-depth self-cognition and self-transformation based on the concept of development and self-development of a human with the human ability to create himself being its central chain link. For more than 15 years of experience in this method, several modifications of it have been created: for students of non-psychological specialties, for psychology students, for people with behavior similar to drug addicts, etc.

This is a method of comprehensive evaluation of oneself by professional and personal, emotional and volitional, personal and metaindividual (the ability to influence other people) parameters of a personality. Internal motivation is activated by using the situation of free choice, which encourages a human to voluntary behavior, i.e. the behavior chosen by himself.

The main version (for non-psychology students) of the method has become the most popular. The materials of compositions of the tested persons are numerous. Two main peculiarities are represented in them: the ability to master the psychological culture and the ability for self-development. The purpose of self-interviewing is to define the extent of readiness to operate special psychological knowledge, results of test examinations, readiness for systemic diving into oneself and, based on that, creation of a composition, which can be awarded with three degrees of acknowledgment. According to our system of evaluation of the creative activity by the rating scale of external actions, this is reproduction with improvisations (level 2), creation of a certain new substance on the 'for myself' level (level 3) and, in some cases, it is the creation of a product on the new 'for the people slightly different from me' level (level 4).

The selected parameters of self-analysis mostly correspond to the systemic and structural vision of psychological organization of a person from the perspective of its cognitive, regulative, communicative elements. Besides, the practical implementation of the Self-Interview method encourages students to go beyond the suggested architectonic margins. At this moment, the description of the life journey appears and it is focused on the events and impressions, which are the most important ones for him. The results of approbation of the modified version of Self-Interview have shown that activation of reflexive processes, which promote positive changes of a person, is achievable by means of specially formulated questions included in the method's technology.

This method comprises two stages of the introceptive implementation: at the first stage, students are familiarized with the basic concepts of psychology and must learn the conceptual framework, the basic methods of this science; at the second stage, students are given the opportunity not only to master the professional knowledge in its integrity, but also to apply the acquired knowledge and methods in practice without assistance, which promotes their professional and personal growth, i.e. self-development. And where external motivation most often prevails in the first case (familiarization and its implementation in the form of exams), in the second case, the process of unassisted and chosen by a student himself theoretical and practical mastering of professional knowledge unconsciously activates the mechanism of introspection associated with the internal motivation.
At that, students are not limited in their development by mastering the assigned tasks, but they progress in the direction of their closest potential development on their own initiative.

The Method of Self-Determination and Professional Development of Schoolchildren: This method comprises encouragement of the initiative activity of schoolchildren by actualization of their ability to long-term life planning and personal responsibility for their choice of profession.

The method consists of the diagnostic, consultative and training parts. The diagnostic part is implemented by means of studying the orientation of a person, the motives of the profession selection, the intelligence and the proneness to the personal development. The training part includes the package of events that actively involve schoolchildren into their pre-profile training, which aids their deliberate professional self-determination. The consultative part mostly takes place in the form of group and individual consulting of schoolchildren in interpretation of computer-aided diagnostics and their professional preferences.

The method assumes activation of the mechanism of introception at the transition from diagnostic and consulting parts to the training part. The comprehensive efforts of a psychologist result in a considerable shift from the external motivation to be engaged in some occupation to the internal motivation, which moves material benefits into background and diminishes their role in the value system of a student.

REFERENCES