

TRENDS IN THE MODERN APPROACH TO PRESCHOOL EDUCATION: PARADIGMS

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Annotation. The article is devoted to substantiation of a new paradigm of preschool education, based on the heuristic possibilities of the concept of functional asymmetry of human brain being a system-forming factor for building a new paradigm of education. It is proved that the development of a personality being a free essence presupposes three stages concerning concrete educational technology: up to 6-7 the socio-pedagogical influence on a child must be paradoxical and ambiguous (the dominance of right hemisphere); from 7 to 14 the socio-pedagogical influence on young people must be strict and "one-dimensional" (the dominance of left hemisphere); after 14 the socio-pedagogical influence on young people must be "one-dimensional" and "multidimensional" simultaneously (the state of hemispheric harmony): as electroencephalographic research shows the hemispheric functional harmony is revealed in the state of meditation and creativity being the major purpose of man's development.

Keywords: the concept of functional asymmetry of human brain; baby and juvenile age; a new paradigm of preschool education; diplasia.

The main feature of our world is motion, being the most important attribute of the matter, the fundamental way of its existence. Thus, the major contents and the most essential way of man's existence is motion, development in time and space, the fullest and the most intensive expression of which can be observed in baby and juvenile age, where this development as socio-personal phenomenon is arranged in the processes of teaching, upbringing, education, realized within the framework of school system. That is why the main volume of social and individual life is concentrated in the domain of education which crystallizes the continuous intellectual space of cultural and historic development of mankind. School meets the requirements of society and has always been the basic social institute that, as J. Dewey puts it, can create in the project such type of a society which we would like to realize; influencing the people in this direction, we would gradually change the nature of adult society.

Preschool education is an educational process focusing on educating children from the ages of infancy until six years old. In the XX-th century, several European educators (R.Owen in Great Britain, J. H. Pestalozzi in Switzerland, F.Froebel in Germany, M. Montessori in Italy, J.Dewey in the USA, L.S.Vygotsky in Russia and others) began to develop educational systems designed for early childhood in the hope of actively helping children during one of the most crucial stages in human development.

Preschool education is usually grouped into several aspects: physical development (control of the body as to both gross and fine motor functions); perception and sensory development (developing the sensory system); communication and language development; cognitive development (developing all psychophysiological aspects concerning thinking, sensations, emotions etc using for cognitive processes); emotional development (developing and controlling emotions by a child); social development (socialization process, developing child's identity and his relationship with others).

However, the fundamental problem of preschool education lies in that, that pedagogical community does not have a clear idea about the main goal of human development. Revealing this goal, being the system-forming entity for all other goals and aspects of child's development, is the major purpose of this article focusing on unification the mentioned aspects of child's development around this system-forming goal.

The main priority of the human being is freedom, which is a system-forming beginning of the man. Outside the freedom the man turns into an animal, thus all meaning of human existence loses its meaning. On the level of thinking man's freedom is manifested in diplasia (the fundamental ability of a person to combine in one context the opposite, mutually exclusive concepts, images, objects, for example "the strong weakness", "the alive corpse" etc) being the essence of paradoxes and contradictions.

The freedom is the main goal of man's development and educational process, around which all other educational aims are to be organized. The realization of freedom as the major developmental goals within the preschool education presupposes the actualization of a new paradigm of preschool education.

So defining this goal and to tying the latter with the major aspects of preschool education can be achieved due to the conclusion that conceptually any educational ideology and its strategy are built on the basis of two major aspects - the goals of education and the ways of its achieving. If a man takes for the purpose of education the moulding of a harmonious personality, he should analyze two problems: the problem of defining a harmonic state, and the problem of forming this state.

From the broad philosophical and psychological standpoint harmony is, first of all, the wholeness, that is, the synthesis of all psychophysiological constituents of a person, the unity of his physical and psychological sides, the state integrating thoughts and actions of their carriers, uniting in one whole all multiple dichotomies of our existence, such as moral and factual, internal and external, individual-personal and socio-historic.

It is clear, that the state of people's harmony, as something integral, is realized within the framework of such entity which, first, is a system-forming factor of a person as a holistic system, and, secondly, plays a role of the main regulator of its behavior. We have every reason to state that such a regulator is actualized on the basis of functions of hemispheres of man's cerebral cortex, about what B. G. Anan'jev wrote as far back as sixties, and what is difficult to dispute nowadays.

As the appropriate investigations show, the hemispheres may be possibly considered a psychophysiological focus of human organism, because with their functions such sides of human entity are related, as mechanisms of aim creation and searching for the ways of aim's achieving, energetic and informational regulation of people's behavior, empathy and reflection, extroversion and introversion, automatic and spontaneous psychic activity, first and second signaling systems, power and weakness of nervous processes, their lability and inertness, irritation and suppression, I and non-I, ergotrophic and trophotrophic functions, volitional and non-volitional psychic spheres, sympathetic and parasympathetic branches of vegetative nervous system etc.

Any automatic (subconscious) action of a man is included in right hemispheric, and non-automatic (conscious) - in left hemispheric aspects of psychic activity.

It should be noted that right hemispheric strategy of perception, thinking and mastering the world represents emotional, concrete, expressive, holistic world view which forms ambiguous polysemantic linguistic and motivational context of reflecting the reality, corresponding with energy-field aspect of the Universe which can be characterized as continual type of the matter.

Left hemispheric perception strategy represents, on the contrary, abstract-logical, sign- symbolic, discursive, conceptual, discrete, plural world outlook which forms accurate linguistic and motivational context of reflecting the surrounding world, corresponding with substance- informational aspect of the Universe which can be characterized as discrete type of the matter. We may add that right hemisphere "creates" religious-mythological, artistic reality, awaking to life such forms of social consciousness, as religion and art. Left hemisphere "creates" scientific-technocratic reality, awaking to life science and politics.

It should be emphasized that in onto- and phylogenesis of a living being one observes the process of gradual increasing the hemispheric asymmetry (in a baby the state of functional symmetry of cerebral cortex is observed when the hemispheres work according to the functional pattern of the right hemisphere), the greatest expression of which is reached at a mature age. Afterwards, the hemispheric asymmetry is gradually leveling. The condition for functional synthesis of hemispheres is revealing when elderly person, enriched in life experience, factually transforms himself into a child with its plastic psyche, spontaneity, frankness and openness of perception of the world.

Here we have generally known philosophical idea about the development (thesis - antithesis - synthesis) when the third stage of the development dialectically repeats the first one, but on the higher level of development.

If we take into consideration the fact, that right hemispheric functions focus on the present time with turning to the past, and the left one - on the present time with turning to the future, then it is possible to say that person's development moves quite naturally from past to future, and from the latter - to their integration, when spacio-temporal dichotomy of the Being is eliminated and a person liberates himself from "the curses of Chronos".

The method of integration of “right” and “left” types of world comprehension in schooling process is illustrated by the pedagogical system of V. F. Shatalov that has a miraculous effect. This system applies the principle of hemispheric synthesis when in the framework of the schooling process the two polar aspects of psychics (right, concrete and left, abstract) are putting into harmony. Here on the one hand the pupils are given a certain set of concrete facts (of mathematical, geographic, historical nature, etc.), and on the other hand - all these facts are transformed in the language of so called auxiliary signals which are of abstract nature. That is, every fact and the strings of facts are encoded by abstract signs.

The pupils are taught to manipulate simultaneously with two opposite rows of realities, realizing their mutual transformation, when the concrete is perceived through the abstract and vice versa. The sufficiently long practice of bringing together left and right sides of psychic activity helps to create the orientation to “integral” psychic activity, in the sphere of which the aspiration to the creative activity is revealed and as the result - the schooling processes are accelerated tremendously. It is interesting that all Shalatov’s pupils begin to draw which is the result of activation not only abstract but also emotional aspect of the person. Moreover, the information in this case is being mastered at a great speed.

The principles mentioned above, as we believe, gives us the idea of main aspects of a new paradigm of education, showing in what way to unfold the stages of educational process on the structural, dynamic and pragmatic levels.

Up to 7-8 years of the growing child the right hemispheric aspects of schooling is to be developed.

After the age of 8-12, when the process of active hemispheric asymmetrization is revealed, we are to turn to the left hemispheric aspect of schooling process. But here a great attention should be paid to the process of mutual functional correspondence and harmonizing of both aspects of human being, since here we must achieve the state of hemispheric integration without losing the right hemispheric capacity of person's activity. As the Japanese proverb says, at 10 any of us is a genius, at 15 - a talented person, and at 20 we are just ordinary people.

Similarly, the decomposing effect on the child, according to R. Laing and G. Bateson, can lead to a situation of "double clamp" ("double bond"), which initiates the development of schizophrenia: the situation of double clamp will influence a child when its parents' messages are contradictory on verbal and nonverbal levels, when the child is required both initiative and obedience, when mother could demand the child's affection and at the same time is too cold, sarcastic, when in a school the child due to contradicting factors does not know exactly how it should behave. There is a situation in which any human action or lack of action is inevitably accompanied by the feeling that he is being torn apart.

In this case the individual plunges in so-called cognitive dissonance and seeks to free himself from the ambivalent, and therefore paradoxical, cognitive situation through the distortion of reality. So, wanting something and not being able to get this thing, people may resort to discredit this thing (which can be illustrated by the Russian fable about "green grapes"), thus distorting the reality.

So, in the field of schizophrenic thinking two opposite cognitions cannot peacefully coexist since the splitting "black and white" human mind with its binary yes/no thinking is unable to unite the opposites thus achieving diplasia. This leads to radicalization of man and society which we see in current events, where the bipolar thinking is realized in a “mosaic culture.” G. Debord in his book “The society of the spectacle” (1971) showed that the contemporary technology of manipulating the individual and mass consciousness can destroy in an atomized man the set of knowledge derived from real life and historical experience. G. Debord traces the development of a modern society in which authentic social life has been replaced with its representation: "All that once was directly lived has become mere representation" when the history of social life can be understood as "the decline of being into having, and having into merely appearing". Thus the spectacle becomes the inverted image of society in which relations between commodities have supplanted relations between people, in which "passive identification with the spectacle supplants genuine activity". Thus, the mosaic culture destroys the irrational (right hemispheric) thinking of traditional society and produces an atomized, splintered reality, which is characterized by a low level of synergy and, therefore, by low life activity.

This bipolar thinking is formed in a contradictory and ambivalent socio-pedagogical influence with the development of left-hemispheric brain - one-dimensional thinking.

In little children being characterized by right hemispheric polysemantic, mystical "savage" way of thinking (oriented on the "reality principle" as Jean Piaget puts it) the discordant influences, as a rule, do not form the split-schizophrenic model of perception and behavior.

However, in the process of intense formation of left-hemispheric cognitive strategies enabling to organize unambiguous strictly logical relations in the process of learning and socialization, such contradictory influences often lead to radicalization of the reality due to one-semantic left-brain thinking, that is, to its schizophrenization.

So, it should be understood that the ambivalent effects (with the effect of "double clamp") is a necessary educational resource for younger children (5-6 years old), in which right brain reflection and exploration of the world is dominated. While during the intensive formation of the unambiguous left-brain "splitting" thinking (children of 7-14 years old) such an effect with a "double clamp" can lead to the formation in a person a "splitting" model of schizophrenic perception of the world.

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