

Education Technologies in Addressing the Problem of Forming the Socially Active Individual

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ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the analysis of technological support of the educational process in solving the problem of forming the socially active individual. The authors studied the value of the category "social activity" and analyzed educational technologies that have an impact on its formation. The obtained results gave the possibility to identify four collaterally subordinated types of educational technologies: meta-technologies, sectoral macro-technologies, module-local technologies and micro technologies. This study includes ascertaining information and is based on the methods of pedagogical observation and analysis of results. The study shows unformed social maturity of young people and, consequently, their inability to realize social activity through their own readiness to take the initiative in a public activity. The research findings can be used in teaching practices in order to improve the level of social activity of students in educational institutions.

KEYWORDS

Education technologies, identity formation, social activity of the individual, social maturity

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Introduction

The developing modern Russian society needs people full of initiative who can make their own decisions when one has to choose, people who are able to cooperate, full of mobility, dynamism and constructive way of thinking, having a sense of responsibility for the country's future, for its cultural and socio-economic development. This idea did not appear by accident. Very often, even under the most favorable life conditions, young people are passive; do not show any interest in personal development, they are characterized by the lack of independence and unwillingness to make an effort to transform the surrounding reality (Shagurova, 2013).

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The idea of non-formal education as a civil engagement resource for young people is developed in all countries of the former post-Soviet space, namely in Belarus, Armenia, Georgia, the Baltic States, Moldova, Ukraine, and Azerbaijan (Santeladze, 2012; Veremeichik, 2010).

The need to provide education for the socially active young generation today is revealed in a number of regulations that define the state policy in the field of education in the Russian Federation. Among them, one should mention the Federal Law No. 273-FL "On Education in the Russian Federation" (2012), the State Program of the Russian Federation "Development of Education" for 2013-2020 (2014), The Concept of additional education development for children (2014) etc. In these documents, the purpose of education is defined as the focus on the formation of an individual, capable of realizing the creative potential under dynamic socio-economic conditions, both in his/her own vital interests, and in the interests of society.

The domestic research interest in this issue involves the study of the social roles of man and his activity in the formation of civic identity and political views (Popova, 2014; Povolyaeva, Popova & Dubovik, 2015). Today the analysis of recent theses indicates the rise of a new scientific interest in this topic. The first rise of interest in this issue was observed in Soviet Russia, focusing mainly on the role of employment and workforce in the raising of social activity of children and youth as well as on the issues of ideological upbringing and NGOs in addressing the problem. However, there is apropos little work on how modern education technologies can sort out the problem of forming the socially active individual (Shakirova & Valeeva, 2016; Galimova & Shvetsova, 2016).

Literature Review

Since the mid-1990s Russian research studies in various fields of knowledge brought up the following social activity issues: the influence of parents on the development of social activity of preschool children (Usova, 1996); specific features of raising social activity of children and adolescents by means of art, labor, tourism (Milovanova, 2010). At that time the phenomenon of social identity and civil activity of the individual was studied (Artyuhovich, 2001), as well as the media impact on their formation (Yaremenko, 2000).

Researchers were also interested in the study of conditions of social activity formation. Young scientists studied the school education resources, the possibility of student self-government development (Karpenko, 2005). They analyzed the potential of extracurricular activities of students, examined the impact of the professional activity content on the formation of social activity of the individual in the course of its development during studentship.

Since 2006, Russian research efforts have been directed at active studies related to the development of volunteering culture and voluntary activities of children and youth as a real manifestation of social activity of the individual (Povolyaeva, Popova & Dubovik, 2015). Among these studies, one should distinguish research works specifically devoted to the following aspects:

- a) Terms of preparing children and young people to volunteer activities (Shagurova, 2013);
- b) The results of volunteer practice impact on personal qualities of adolescents and young adults (Arapov, 2013);

c) Development of professional competences in the social and educational spheres (Danilova, 2011).

The previously mentioned trends in modern Russia are largely associated with the development of civil society. Their dynamics is determined by the studies of foreign scholars who since the mid-1960s considered socialization processes in parallel with the development of education (Povolyaeva, Popova & Dubovik, 2015). For example, during the international conference in Williamsburg in 1967, the European educational policy was subject to criticism. The forum concluded that education was too slowly adapting to the emerging socio-economic changes, which entails political and economic difficulties (Infed, 2014). The announced “educational crisis” promoted studies devoted to civil and personal aspects of the educational process (Birdsall, Ross & Sabot, 1997; Bils & Klenow, 2000) as factors of the national economic development (Benavot, 1989; Barro, 1997; Coulombe, Tremblay & Marchand, 2004).

Recent studies advocated the idea of lifelong learning, thus declaring learning throughout life as the basic conceptual stance. This idea allows making the independent choice of the content, forms and methods of learning for any age group based on social status and life experience. In this regard, the individual learning path is developed both in the professional aspect and in the general cultural and civil areas. This is emphasized in the paper by A. Giddens (1998), where the need for lifelong learning is considered as one of the basic pre-conditions of forming the socially active individual.

C. Bodeving (2014), one of the modern European scientists, defines non-formal education for youth leaders as one of the most promising technologies of forming the socially active individual. He considers several levels of recognition of non-formal education in the society; this generates the information portfolio, which allows young people to acquire professional, civil, recreational and other competencies beyond the traditional education.

Presently specialists study the possibility of introducing a specific youth content in the form of Europass portfolio, including five sections: Europass-CV; Europass Mobility; Europass-Diploma Supplement; Europass-Language Passport; Europass-Certificate Supplement (Selevko, 2005; Baetz, 2015). A.V. Zosimovskiy (1962) and T.N. Malkovskaya (1988) studied specific features of raising social activity of schoolchildren at different stages of their age development. The paper by V.A. Sitarov (2013) considered pedagogical aspects of social activity development as regards students of secondary and higher educational institutions.

Detailed methodology related to the certification of non-formal education in the countries of near and far abroad is presented in “The European experience in the recognition of professional qualifications obtained through non-formal and spontaneous learning” (Dekhtiarenko, 2011).

S. Laboda (2012) argues that the emergence of a new request on the results and outcomes of education is one of the most important prerequisites for the development of non-formal education in Belarus. The acquired independence initiated reforms in the field of the national education system, which aims at providing relevant knowledge and expertise for the people to build their own lives and to participate in public life (Veremeichik, 2010).

Aim of the Study

The research seeks to analyze the technological support of the educational process in solving the problem of forming the socially active individual. Moreover, the study aims to examine the value of the category "social activity" and determine types of modern educational technologies.

Research questions

According to the objective, the following foreground tasks are:

- a) to analyze previous studies related to the impact of educational technologies on forming the socially active individual;
- b) to explore the involvement of young people into social practice and raising their awareness of the potential development possibilities in Russia; analyze foreign experience in this regard;
- c) to identify collaterally subordinated types of educational technologies;
- d) to examine social integration of young people who found themselves in difficult situations.

Materials and Methods

This study includes ascertaining information and is based on the methods of pedagogical observation and analysis of results. This method allows studying specific aspects or characteristics of the research subject in vivo, without planning or purposeful experiment.

Along with that, the survey method was used in relation to high school students, with a view to study the relationship of the senior teenagers to the subject of social activity and their ideas regarding the essence of this phenomenon.

The study was conducted between 2010 and 2014, based on secondary schools located in Vladimir, Kovrov, Murom and Petushki. These towns served as regional research and experimental sites of the Vladimir Regional Department of Education. The study aimed at considering the impact of the educational potential on the formation of personal qualities of high school graduates and, more specifically, the maturity of the socially active individual. Throughout four years, the study involved more than 600 high school graduates. The survey analysis gave the possibility to distinguish how young people (aged 16-17) understand the social activity phenomenon. In this regard, one could point out the following features:

- a) The largest number of respondents (63%) describe social activity as participation in various events, including events organized by the school, separate class or group of students;
- b) Approximately 21% of the participants describe social activity as participation in social life, including the manifestation of their leadership position, taking social initiatives;
- c) 6% claimed that social activity is a manifestation of activity in everything related to human communication, including the development of social relations;
- d) 10% said that social activity is associated with the manifestation of the need to help people who need support.

According to the above data, approximately every third young individual who became adult, showed the position of an active subject, oriented at the transformation of the surrounding society through helping those in need (10%),

generating creative ideas and solutions of social problems (21%), as well as through the development of social ties and relationships (6%).

However, almost two thirds of respondents (63%) demonstrated immature understanding of the individual social activity, describing it mainly as participation in a series of activities provided by the institutions and organizations where they got their education. This demonstrates the unformed social maturity of young people and, as a consequence, the inability to link social activity with the readiness to be proactively involved in the socially important activities.

The information obtained during the survey among adolescents gave the possibility to formulate the purpose of research: to analyze the value of the "social activity" as a category and to analyze educational technologies having impact on its formation.

Results

Keeping in mind the complexity of technologism in education and the results of pedagogical monitoring carried out in modern schools one could distinguish four collaterally subordinated types of educational technologies. They are determined by the impact of education on the process of maturation of the individual as a subject of social transformations. These include:

1) Meta technologies (social and political level), which foster the implementation of the state social policy and complex solution of general social problems (educational, medical, legal, economic, environmental). For example, technologies aiming at combating crime and preventing drug use; healthy lifestyle technologies, etc.

2) Sectoral macro technologies (socio-pedagogical level), which imply the pedagogically expedient actions aimed at the implementation of educational policies within certain categories of institutions or social groups. For example, technologies aiming at the implementation of social rehabilitation programs, technologies of educational systems establishment, the technology "school as the center of education in the social environment" (Shatsky, 1980), etc.

3) Modular-local technologies (methodological level), which cover parts (modules) of the educational process of a certain institution. For example, the technology of organizing some educational activities (entertainment technology), technologies aiming at the development of personal qualities, including personal image-making technologies, the technology aiming at tolerance development, etc.

4) Micro technologies (contact-personal level), which present individual interactions with a specific person. For example, social and psychological training technologies, role-plays, group forms of work, etc. These technologies present chains of technological adaptation methods related to the participants of the educational process, as well as methods of involvement into certain activities, comprehension of results and possible prospects.

Micro technologies can be part of any modular-local technology, part of a sectoral technology, which is also a part of the meta-technologies. Micro-technologies can rise in status, if their tasks are crucial for the educational team. For example, the communication training (micro technology) may get the modular-local status if the tutors set specific key goals, for instance, the development of certain qualities and competences of students (for example, the team aims at communication skills

training as one of the social competences of the individual, not just teaching stereotypes of verbal behavior).

The most widespread technologies used with a view to encourage social activity of children and teenagers are the creative activity technology, training technology (leadership and communication skills training, courses on decision making, etc.), social planning technologies, the technology of social practice management (volunteering).

From this perspective, today socially oriented educational technologies may be of interest. Among them, one should note the technology of value orientation workshops, developed and implemented in the Vyatka humanitarian gymnasium.

With regard to the analysis of relevant information, one can state that social activity of an individual in the most general terms is defined as the ability and opportunity to display one's own efforts for the social benefit.

Modern Russian studies also use additional approaches to the determination of this social, psychological and educational characteristic, namely:

a) Social activity of the individual - personal quality, which implies fascination with everything that is happening around (in the office, town, city, country) (Marentseva, 2011);

b) Social activity - as a degree of human involvement in socially active life (Khaykin, 2000);

c) Social activity - as an urgent need of the individual, which is implemented in a particular system of goals and motives that determine individual interests and individual involvement in the transforming activity (Goryaeva, 2006).

Currently, the comprehensive definition of the category "social activity" is provided by V.Z. Kogan (1981), who understands social activity as the conscious and purposeful activity of a person, its integral social and psychological qualities, which are dialectically interdependent and identify and characterize the degree or extent of the personal impact of the subject on the object, processes and phenomena of the reality. In this definition, the true way of social being is defined by the activity, which can provide full self-expression.

Discussion and Conclusion

In practice, one can witness the reverse transition – decrease in the status of modular-local technology to micro technology if its goals in a new, broader context change to private educational objectives. In this context, O. Gazman (2013) believes that organization of leisure activities, for example, is one of the micro technologies within the modular-local technology used in extraclass work.

The studies carried out by modern teachers, psychologists, philosophers and sociologists show a similar approach – they consider voluntary social activity of youth as a resource used to solve social problems, as the precondition aimed at the development of socially significant qualities that contribute to the formation of active life position, as regards boys and girls (Arapov, 2013; Parshina, 2001).

In this regard, the analysis of technological support related to the formation of socially active individual in the process of education is of certain interest. The application of technological approach and the term "technology" as regards social processes in the field of education and socialization of the individual is currently in high demand in terms of pedagogical practice (Popova, 2014). The introduction of technological approach is determined by the requirement of the system analysis of

innovation in the field of education, as well as by searching ways to enhance the effectiveness of education process, as well as by the need to generalize scientific and practical knowledge related to the solution of social problems, in particular the problems of social motivation of children and youth.

G.K. Selevko (2005) believes that the concept of "educational technology" (from Greek *techne*, "art, skill, cunning of hand"; and *logos* - knowledge) currently has three main aspects of the analysis:

1) Scientific-methodological, where educational technology is understood as the scientifically based approach to solving a particular social problem, with regard to the achievements of psycho-pedagogical theory and best practices;

2) Constructive, where educational technology serves as a model that includes the description of the objectives, content, methods and tools, algorithms of actions used to achieve the expected results;

3) Functionally procedural, where technology serves as the process of implementing the activities, the sequence and order of change as regards all its components, including facilities and stakeholders.

The problem of technologism in the educational process is complicated due to specific variability of the existing conceptual bases. For example, the algorithmic paradigm, which implies gradual implementation of pedagogical influence on the consciousness and behavior of the child, initially specifies certain mechanistic approach to education. The representatives of humanist pedagogy, which basic idea is to provide personal growth and development, actively oppose such approach. In this regard, understanding of the uniqueness of every individual is opposed to strict adherence to technological algorithms. From the perspective of humanistic pedagogy, there is no universal method of changing personal qualities, or universal means of influence on social changes.

Describing the paradigmatic approaches to defining the essence of technologism in education, one should keep in mind the probabilistic paradigm. The educational technology in this regard is considered as creating the environment, which fosters the development of human personality traits and social competencies that can provide his/her relations with other people, with the world and with himself/herself. The structure of educational technology in this paradigm includes the following aspects:

1) The study of subjective experience of students (value-based, behavioral, attitudinal), social ties among the subjects of the educational process, their value-based orientations, ideals, motives and needs, behavior stereotypes, specific features of the social activity organization;

2) The system of goals aimed at solving the problems of socialization and identity;

3) The activity motivation system related to the individual as the subject of reality transformation, cultural creativity, and changes in the social environment;

4) The model of educational environment that would facilitate the formation of a positive social experience in terms of involvement in the socially useful activities.

Analyzing an experience different countries, can note the Belarussian Association of UNESCO Clubs organizes non-formal education for pupils and students. In this regard, the following programs are the most popular: "Universities of UNESCO Clubs" (self-management, life skills training courses, the exchange of

ideas and projects, cultural and sport events, press center); "Academy of UNESCO Clubs" (project management, public relations); "Study circles and training courses" (training for trainers and youth leaders on the implementation of social projects); "Youth in Action" (seminars, training courses, international exchange programs on relevant youth issues); "Youth initiatives in the field of non-formal education" (low-cost initiatives to address urgent tasks) (Youth Summer Camp, 2010; ISUUC, 2011).

In Armenia, non-formal education aims at the development of political, civil, social, economic and cultural self-consciousness, which is formed beyond or within the formal education system (Galitskikh, 2003). In the Azerbaijani Republic, particular interest is shown in the non-formal vocational education. Relevant statistical data indicate a problem of young people involvement into the implementation of non-formal educational programs: about 32.8% of Azerbaijani students who have graduated from secondary schools (Grade 11) continued their study in higher and secondary educational institutions, 6.3 % of them completed vocational or professional courses and about 57.5% did not participate in any educational program (Alioglu & Ramazanov, 2014). The young people who are not involved in the non-formal education "make more than one third of the total number of unemployed citizens" (Ibid). The risk of further rise in unemployment highlights the issue of improving the system of non-formal education for the younger generation of the Azerbaijani Republic.

The above problems are actively tackled in Georgia and Moldova. International projects create additional opportunities for employment, self-realization and active social participation, as well as for assistance in overcoming stress, for socially vulnerable people and children (Santeladze, 2012).

Workshops devoted to value orientations solve the problems of spiritual development of the individual, enable students to analyze large number of different points of view on any issue and to form their personal views.

The algorithm for constructing the value orientation workshop includes several stages. The beginning of the workshop (inductor) - the first task with a view to motivate future activities of participants. It stresses personal experience of each participant and creates a situation of choice, search for associations, awakens the imagination, promotes further actions of the participant.

The first stage - work with materials, information, situation and experience of relations. It includes the development of individual creative product, its presentation to all the participants, the intermediate reflection and self-correction activities. This work completes with formulation of questions / issues.

The second stage implies getting new information, its processing (drawing diagrams, plans, projects, consideration and creation of posters, drawings, newspapers), along with adjustment of the actual creative social product. The crucial moment of the workshop is group discussion, the emergence of the gap between the old and the new understanding, hypotheses, new issues, presentation of key findings to all participants.

Reflexive stage - work completion through the general analysis of what was experienced, understood, discovered along with determination of the new problems (Veremeichik, 2010).

The workshop participants create slogans, posters, essays, reflexive responses, reports, pages from diaries, etc. as the socially oriented "products". The main result

is the creation of conditions for understanding the existing value judgments, ranking personal value orientations, development of new ideas aimed at self-development and the benefit of others.

This technology is aimed at promoting the need to study man in connection with the social phenomena and social reality, to analyze the problematic areas, to identify areas, which need social activity and a high degree of involvement of the country's concerned, energetic young citizens. Implementation of this technology provides the basis of values, which subsequently foster the activity-related practice along with the presentation of results in the form of social initiatives and concrete actions.

Social engineering presents another effective method and technology aiming at stimulation and implementation of social activity. It is a constructive, creative activity, which implies to analyze problems and to identify their causes, to develop goals and objectives that characterize the desired state of the social object, as well as to develop ways and means of their achievement. The practice of project activities implementation is presently quite widespread and focuses on the formation of students' social skills, such as "choice", "decision", "responsibility", "participation", "understanding", "planning", "team work", and contributes to professional self-determination and the establishment of civil consciousness.

During the period of Soviet Russia, the youth ideologists and the youth movement represented by a strict «Pioneer-Komsomol» system actively used this experience. Examples of application of these technologies can be found in public organizations, projecting their future and deliberately raising their followers. These include volunteer corps, group mentoring, organizations involved in volunteering.

Mastering the technology of the organization of workshops aimed at the development of value orientations and social planning can promote conscious motivation of socially oriented activities of the person as a full-fledged subject in the formation of his/her civil and cultural identity.

This study gives the possibility to conclude that keeping in mind technologism trends in the field of education, existing in the world pedagogical community, divergent forms of social practices, are being actively developed in modern Russia. Presently, they are widely represented by different socially oriented practices: social actions, the development of labor, environmental, educational groups, sports clubs, tourist groups and others. With due regard to the international experience, social activity of the young Russians develops in line with the work paradigm and is manifested in various forms. Among them, one could stress the social practice of historical and cultural reconstruction, role-plays, search group activities, political youth organizations, voluntary communities and others (Youth Summer Camp, 2010).

Therefore, realizing the importance of education in promoting development of the individual, the person with a strong sense of responsibility for his people and his country, one of the key priorities and responsibilities of modern Russian teachers is reinterpretation of the potential of educational technologies as a resource for the development of active social position as regards the new generation of young Russians, and implementation of these technologies as an effective tool for organizing modern education practices related to forming the socially active individual.

Implications and Recommendations

Now countries are determined to build a society with individuals who contribute to the development of independent thinking and demonstrate self-realization in social groups and activities. So it is important to determine social environment factors influence the formation of personality. Recent studies show that technological support of the educational process can play in key role in solving the problem of forming the socially active individual. We examine theoretical and practical approaches to the study of social activity of the individual. The practical value is that research can be the basis of teaching practices aimed at improving the level of social activity of young people.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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