

POSITIVE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN TERMS OF DEVELOPING CREATIVITY AND CRITICAL THINKING

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ABSTRACT

The formation of a person's personality in his intellectual and moral improvement, the expansion of his independence, creativity and critical thinking is possible within his participation in the educational process. In the conditions of the Slovak Republic, the subject of civics plays an important role in this process.

The aim of the paper is to point out the topicality of the researched problem and to present the given issue as a means of increasing the professional competencies of teachers in the field of development of critical and creative thinking of students. In this article, we pay attention to one of the innovative forms of learning, dialogue. As part of the APVV project *Practice in the centre of the subject field didactics, subject field didactics in the centre of preparation for practice* we used pedagogical diaries and video recordings from the pedagogical practice of teacher education students in the 1st - 2nd year of master's degree in civics at primary and secondary schools.

Keywords: *teacher, student, creativity, critical thinking, dialogue*

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the most important aspect of education is becoming consciousness of the responsibility of each personality for his actions in terms of creative and critical thinking, which allows to develop positive interpersonal relationships. It can be stated that acting in the intentions of creativity and criticism can cultivate a person as a human individual and help to form a noble, free person, who is able to communicate with people with different level of education, as well as with people belonging to other nations [1].

Education is an integral part of socio-historical development and it is possible to point out the fact that every individual in every culture and in every historical moment is influenced, directed, and also brought up [2]. Current education and upbringing should be oriented towards a person who is characterized by overall culture, high culture of lifestyle, interest in the common good, justice, tolerance, the ability to cooperate and social feeling.

Education and upbringing play an important role in the context of mastering the principles of developing positive interpersonal relationships and are focused on:

- respect for and proper development of the young person's personality, his human dignity and self-respect,
- not limiting the independence and critical thinking of the young person,
- not humiliating the young person with ridicule, irony, unjust evaluation,
- the appearance of the young person and the way of his expression,
- education for respect and decency.

In this context, education is mainly important [3] because it should focus on promoting a high culture of expression, manifested in the art of living, the art of treating people and creating harmonious relationships between people. Mutual behavior is part not only of the current, but especially of the future way of life and lifestyle. Relationships and contacts between people in the family, at work and in the wider society should lead to higher values, mutual understanding and coexistence, positive enrichment of life.

DIALOGUE IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

The abilities to communicate [4], to think and to lead a dialogue play a very important role in the educational process in the context of improving each personality, developing his creative and critical thinking. This means, as Popper writes: If I want to learn in the interest of truth, then I have not only to tolerate you but also to recognize you as a potential equal... Of importance also is the principle that we can learn much from a discussion, even when it does not lead to agreement: a discussion can help us to understand some of the weaknesses of our own attitude [5]. This means that the basis of interpersonal communication is the necessity to be able to hear a different opinion and the argument of the other subject, to understand the other subject, as well as to understand the value situation of the other subject.

Learning creativity and critical thinking means to acquire appropriate forms of verbal and nonverbal behavior in conducting communication, and to master the following:

a) Competencies from the point of view of the listener

1. Availability - the ability to dispose of something or someone; the speaking person should be concentrated, attentive and prompt; the listener's attention is an important element.
2. Suitable forms of behavior:
 - clear visual contact,

- dynamic facial expression, corresponding to the tone and content of the speech,
- the attitude of the receiver; orientation of the body towards the speaker,
- appropriate distance,
- verbal approval to the content that was heard,
- elimination of disturbing movements.

b) Competencies from the point of view of the speaker

1. Adequacy - in particular the following points are important:
 - the person who wants to speak must notice whether the listener is ready for the content that will be communicated,
 - the speaker should be adequately and mentally oriented,
 - the activity of the listener should be in accordance with the communication process,
 - compliance with the environment and the situation,
 - space and place without disturbing moments, noise and discomfort,
 - enough time.
2. Requirements for the quality of the speaker's speech:
 - appropriate tone of voice,
 - assertiveness,
 - suitable forms of behavior,
 - clear visual contact,
 - orientation of the body towards the listener,
 - facial expression gestures, corresponding to the content of the speech,
 - appropriate distance.

c) Competencies from the point of view of the speaker as well as listener:

- to live fully in the present moment, to focus on communication between the speaker and the listener
- free yourself from prejudices about the other person assertiveness (even those that result from our memories and experiences of a person in other situations or moments),
- to concentrate all attention and disposition on the realization of the current relationship,
- to say no if someone has many requirements on us or if someone involves us too much criticism and expresses feelings of disappointment in relationship with us,
- humor, not ridicule,
- willingness to understand and be understandable to others,
- speak concretely and clearly,

- possibility for the realization of others,
- ability to speak natural language
- to accept what the conversation will bring and also not expect that expectations of speakers and listeners will be fulfilled [6].

Creative personality is the result of mastering the mentioned competencies. It is a personality who forms a synthesis of new knowledge and develops imagination, understanding, flexibility, discovery of context as well as independence of thinking. Olivar states that the creative personality is realized by his own activity. Creative people face problems and challenges that are aimed at supporting the development of their abilities, skills and intelligence [6].

At present, there are strict requirements for teachers to be able to communicate both verbally and non-verbally and to be able to make contact with students without any problems. Gavora states that communication is a basic prerequisite for the implementation of education, while the verbal and nonverbal expressions of teachers and students are applied [7].

Based on the mapping of the current situation, it has been shown and can be stated that dialogue plays an important role in the educational process. The following attributes need to be highlighted in the dialogue: correctly asking questions that require reflection, analysis, derivation; coming up with the correct answer; giving students the opportunity to deal with specific situations; requirements of creativity; focusing on explaining certain relationships and finding connections; requirements of formulating opinion and evaluation.

In the answers, the student learns to distinguish facts from assumptions, arguments from conclusions, important information from less important. The student also learns to formulate answers that require a creative approach and creative problem-solving, so the answer of each student is unique and original.

PROBLEM SOLUTION AND FORMULATION OF SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The issue of problem solving is an integral part of the subject of Civics. The role of the teacher is to teach students to orient themselves in the field of problem solving, to get acquainted with different approaches to these solutions and to formulate conclusions related to problem solving.

Students face the problems and the basis of the problem-solving strategy is the fact that the teacher should discuss with the students these problems and their possible solutions.

In the problem-solving process, the teacher should lead students to:

- understanding the problem,
- creating a solution plan,
- implementation of the solution plan,
- checking the correctness of the solution [8].

This means that it is necessary to teach students to choose only important information in the problem-solving process, to think creatively, to suggest several different solutions, to evaluate possible solutions depending on various criteria as well as to formulate conclusions.

The teacher can use different problem-solving procedures to help students better understand the problem - games, pictures, videos, concept maps, graphs and also interpretation-problem method, which has the following structure:

- problem identification,
- logical procedure of solution,
- solution process, possible and real difficulties and problems
- explanation of the importance of the solution for further development of students' thinking and activities.
- vysvetlenie dôležitosti riešenia pre ďalší rozvoj myslenia a aktivít žiakov [9].

During the interpretation of problem solving, the teacher identifies the problems, explains the formulated hypotheses and points to the scientific solution of problems.

In the dialogue, the student comments different situations, explains the aim as well as clarifies some intentions and situations that are not clear to him. The dialogue provides a space for solving many questions, finding answers with purpose to improve the student's activity and self-reflection.

Effective dialogue will allow the student to better understand the requirements for his activity, which are set by the teacher of the subject and the school. Formulated opinions, suggestions for rational procedures and solutions are the result of effective dialogue.

The dialogue includes questions that can be differentiated into the following types:

a) Reproductive (closed) questions

- these types of questions require the reproduction of facts, data and theorem,

- the questions are based mainly on memory processes and require students to mechanically remember individual facts, concepts, rules, reproduction of text units,
- examples of questions: *Which of the formulas will you use? What is it called? Where was he born? What is it? What is the law?*

b) Application questions

- applications questions require reasoning, analysis and inference - the student must come to the only correct answer,
- questions are based on the relationship between theory and practice, they give students the opportunity to solve specific situations,
- examples of questions: *Where in nature can we see ...? What are other examples? What would you do in a similar situation? Where is it applied in practice?*

c) Productive questions

- these questions are broad, open-ended questions that are not the only correct answer,
- productive questions require creativity, interpretation and imagination,
- these types of questions are oriented to understanding and focus on explaining certain relationships and finding context,
- examples of questions: *Why...? For what reason...? How do you explain that ...? What is the cause ...?*

d) Evaluation questions

- mentioned questions require judgment, opinion and evaluation,
- for this type of question, every answer is correct if it is in accordance with morality,
- evaluation questions are questions that give students the opportunity to express their opinion or idea,
- these questions focus on setting criteria for the assessment of certain phenomena and facts,
- examples of questions: *What would you appreciate ...? Where do you see the differences? What would you highlight ...?*

e) Analytical questions

- these questions are aimed at explaining the relationships between the individual elements,
- in the answers to this type of questions the student distinguishes facts from hypotheses, arguments from conclusions, important information from less important,

- examples of questions: *What are the main and secondary features ...? According to what criteria was the division made ...? How were they arranged ...?*

f) Creative questions

- these types of questions are aimed at expressing assumptions that are result of own observation,
- questions require a creative approach and a creative solution,
- creative questions are characterized by the fact that certain student's idea or a specific student's product are expressed in the answers, and moreover they are unique and original,
- examples of questions: *What happened when ...? What would change in the world if ...? What can we do to ...?*

g) Organizational questions

- organizational questions are oriented to the organization and management of the teaching process, student's activity during the lessons,
- these types of questions contribute and support checking and diagnostic activity of teachers.

The dialogue helps the teacher to improve the teaching process, encourages him to continue his work and can be a motivation for both the teacher and the student to improve their work performance and to increase their education. There is also the possibility of feedback, correction, discussion of problems in the dialogue.

Based on the above it can be stated that the teacher in the education of students contributes to the development of dialogue, creativity, critical thinking and positive interpersonal relationships. In the context of the mentioned the teacher should follow the State Educational Program of the Slovak Republic (2011), which defines personality of student follows:

- the student has his own identity, he is himself and at the same time this identity includes prosociality,
- the personality of the student has a positive relationship with life and people and this relationship is associated with healthy criticism,
- the behavior of the pupil's personality is determined by his own convictions and internalized ethical norms, which are the result of universal solidarity and justice, and therefore the pupil's personality is independent of the pressure of society,
- the personality of the student has a mature moral opinion based on generalized principles, so he is able to react correctly even in unexpected and difficult situations,

- the student's personality is characterized by a combination of right thinking and right action,
- the student acts in accordance with his principles, but also with emotional commitment and does not act only out of duty,
- the student accepts others in their diversity, accepts their opinions and is willing to make an acceptable compromise that does not conflict with universal values,
- the student's personality is willing and able to cooperate and also initiate cooperation [10].

Fulfillment of the mentioned aspects is possible only on the basis of education in the following areas:

- to develop students' ability to know and want to learn,
- to strengthen pupils' self-confidence in problem solving, which is related with learning,
- to develop functional literacy and critical thinking in students,
- to participate in defining the values of a polite and moral person [11].

This means that mastering interpersonal communication is important for forming harmonious relationships between people. Interpersonal communication is conditioned by conscious human activity and purposeful education of the person of the 21st century. There is also necessary a human who will be able to creatively develop his own value structures, take altruistic attitudes, and moreover the humanity will be the defining feature for human behavior and actions.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be stated that positive interpersonal relationships allow to develop creativity and creative thinking through the implementation of dialogue. Dialogue is a difficult way of communication and has an irreplaceable place in the educational process. Dialogue helps the teacher to contribute to the formation of the student's personality, learning to communicate with the intentions of creativity and critical thinking.

The mentioned can be achieved by increasing the professional competencies of teachers, which contribute to the development of creativity and independence of students. We state these conclusions on the basis of the APVV project implemented by the team of experts at Constantine the Philosopher University Nitra *Practice in the centre of the subject field didactics, subject field didactics in the centre of preparation for practice*. In the context of these strategies, methods of problem-based teaching are important, which allow to activate students, lead them to creativity, analytical-critical thinking, independence, self-assessment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was supported by the Slovak Research and Development Agency under the contract No. APVV-15-0368.

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