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Collaboration in the Kindergarten as a Pedagogical Means for Developing Positive Attitudes

Summary: Nowadays preschool pedagogical process organisation needs scientific basis. The research methodological substantiation involves activity procedural structural and anthropological methodological approaches. The article explains possibilities of Latvia preschool education, analyses concepts on collaboration essence in teaching/learning, teacher's position and competences in collaboration at up-bringing activity at preschool. In kindergarten pedagogical process, collaboration is used as pedagogical means, up-bringing principle and the teacher's personally significant activity for development of child's positive attitudes. The empirical research is based on the authors's pedagogical self-experience at music sessions at preschool interest education, experience of teachers' collaboration styles at Latvian preschool music education association courses (1000 respondents), observations at preschool education institutions (kindergartens and education of interests) and reflection of teachers' experience using collaboration as pedagogical means for development of children's positive attitudes at kindergarten.

Keywords: activity, attitudes, collaboration, preschool pedagogical process

Резюме: В настоящее время организация дошкольного педагогического процесса требует научного обоснования. В методологическом обосновании исследования подход процедурно структурной деятельности и антропологический подход. В статье анализируются специфика дошкольного образования Латвии, сущность сотрудничества в педагогическом процессе, позиция и компетенции педагога в сотрудничестве с детьми в воспитании положительных отношений в дошкольных учреждениях. В детском саду сотрудничество используется в качестве педагогического средства, принципа воспитания в лично значимой деятельности педагога. Эмпирическое исследование основывается на педагогическом опыте автора в музыкальном кружке образования по интересам для дошкольников, опыте стиля работы педагога в детских садах, исследованного на курсах Ассоциации дошкольного музыкального образования Латвии, наблюдения в дошкольных образовательных учреждениях (детских садах и учреждениях образования по интересам) и рефлексии опыта педагогов о сотрудничестве с детьми в детском саду.

Ключевые слова: деятельность, дошкольный педагогический процесс, отношения, сотрудничество.

Zusammenfassung (Kooperation im Kindergarten als pädagogisches Mittel für die Entwicklung einer positiven Einstellung): Die heutige Gestaltung des vorschulpädagogischen Prozesses benötigt eine wissenschaftlich-methodologische Grundlage. Deren Erforschung schließt prozedurale, strukturelle und anthropologische Ansätze ein. Die Autorin analysiert die Spezifik der Vorschulerziehung in Lettland, das Wesen der Kooperation im pädagogischen Prozess, die Position und die Kompetenzen der Pädagogen im Rahmen dieser Kooperation mit den Kindern und die Entwicklung positiver Beziehungen innerhalb vorschulpädagogischer Einrichtungen. Im Kindergarten wird Zusammenarbeit genutzt als pädagogisches Mittel und Prinzip einer sinnvollen Tätigkeit des Erziehers. Die empirische Forschung basiert auf der pädagogischen Erfahrung der Autorin in einem Bildungskreis für die musikalische Bildung von Vorschulkindern, auf der Beobachtung der kooperativen Arbeitsweise von Pädagoginnen in Kindergärten, die in Kursen des Vereins für musikalische Vorschulbildung Lettlands analysiert wurden sowie auf Reflexionen der Erfahrungen von Pädagogen hinsichtlich der Kooperation mit Kindern im Kindergarten.

Schlüsselwörter: Aktivität, Haltungen, Zusammenarbeit, vorschulpädagogischer Prozess

Introduction

Latvia's preschool education documents state that in order to maintain the principles and needs of the child psychic development processes, the children's holistic and harmonious development is being promoted, knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for individual and social life are being taught at preschool, maintaining purposeful preparation for acquiring of the basic education. Regulations No 533 "Regulations of state education guidelines" by Ministry of Education and Science and the Cabinet of Ministers (CM) confirmed on 31 July 2012 by CM came into force on 17 August 2012.

The preschool pedagogical process in Latvia is being organized purposefully on the above mentioned basis. Holistic development is being promoted by the child's personally significant activity, by self-realisation of the inborn need to explore the world. The teacher's support at kindergarten is significant for the formation of the child's habits and self-regulatory attitude to the responsibilities and rights regulated by the state laws. Therefore, the necessity to develop collaboration with the child at preschool is actualised. The theoretical substantiation of this research is based on the verities about collaboration by Maurice Balson (1995), on Ausma Sphona's (2006) upbringing theory on attitudes and the teacher's position to collaboration, Christoph Wulf's (2007) anthropological approach to the human's development at a definite place and time and on Anna Liduma's (2014, 2015) actualities about the content of the preschool pedagogical process.

The empiric research reveals interpretation of observations and interviews at the conferences of Latvia's preschool music education association and the pedagogical collaboration self-experience at music lessons by the author of the article.

According to the theoretical verities by the selected authors, this research explores collaboration for promotion of the child positive attitudes at preschool in four aspects: as a social skill, as an education method, as an educational upbringing principle, as a personally significant value.

The aim of the study: to analyse collaboration and reflect on the results of the teacher's collaboration with 6-7 year olds at music lessons of education of interests.

The essence and characteristics of collaboration

The research theoretical basis is established on anthropological approach, which demands analysis of the human evolution and morphology in pedagogy research, development through time, space and evolutionary development at a definite environment (Wulf, 2007, pp. 542-545). It is possible for the human at benevolent social conditions. Especially it has to be actualised at preschool education.

Democracy involves social equality, the system, where authoritarian style is eliminated, and which does not allow one human's rule over another. M. Balson perceives collaboration as a pedagogical value. The teacher violates the human rights, forcing the children do as the teacher desires, without considering the children's desires. Thus, the children do not develop a positive attitude to equality, mutual respect, shared responsibility and self-discipline. The learners have the same equal rights as the teachers regarding human dignity, self-respect and determining autonomy (Balson, 1995, pp. 13-16).

At organizing of the pedagogical process, it is significant to maintain that *collaboration* is used as an education *method*, which ensures the learners distribution into self-dependently working small groups involving the children with different abilities and knowledge into them. The essence of the

method is based on collaboration relationships and skills development, not on the competition among the groups or inside the group. Collaboration predicts *mutual correlation* both inside the group and amid the groups as well (Balson, 1995, p. 81).

According to A. Shpona's upbringing theory verities, the upbringing strategy is consists of three upbringing principles: 1) purposefulness, 2) focus on the positive in a person, 3) agreement between one's words and acts. The principle of the purposefulness is based on the human need to succeed, to positive collaboration and demands to direct the upbringing work content and organization onto the 21st century upbringing goal: to develop an autonomous, self-dependent and responsible personality (Sphona, 2006, Liduma, 2013).

Purposefulness is a significant trait of a human personality – the value, which reveals itself in skill to overcome difficulties, to succeed in both close and further goals of life activities. At preschool by the teacher and the child collaboration process:

- 1) the child learns the skill to set the goal and anticipate its result due to the psychological preparation activity;
- 2) the child learns the skill autonomously choose the activity means for reaching the goal through the practical preparation activity;
- 3) the child learns skills to use the means through the activity realization;
- 4) by evaluation the child learns skills to self-evaluation through evaluation of the set goal and the reached goal. These skills need systematic exercise at the preschool pedagogical process. For the attitudes development at preschool, the scientifically substantiated teacher's work and model is significant as an important upbringing means for the child and the adult collaboration.

In 2014 in accordance with the actualized needs of the society, A. Shpona specifies corrections and puts forward innovative principles: 1) collaboration principle, 2) support onto achievements and 3) free choice principle (Sphona, 2014, 188-192). Collaboration principle bestows upon precision of the purposefulness activity at collaboration. *Collaboration at preschool* is being developed as a personally significant value for the teacher and the child on condition, when the child possesses a real equality with the adult. Collaboration content is seen in Table1.

Table 1: Collaboration content

| | |
|---|--|
| Collaboration as an organized educational upbringing activity process | Two or more people working towards a shared goal, by co-ordinated means for the goal reaching, close for evaluation and self-evaluation on the results gained. |
| Collaboration as a process for experience enrichment | A form for experience borrowing for self-experience promotion with new knowledge, skills and attitudes |
| Collaboration as a result | Attained knowledge, skills, attitudes, self-experience |
| Collaboration as a personally significant value | Sense of achievement and self-esteem |

Diverse emotions can be observed in preschool age children. Practice reveals that deficiency of self-experience causes difficulty to adapt oneself to new conditions. Therefore, it is necessary to explain the task, so that the child begins to develop positive motives for activity, positive attitude to collaboration with other people. As the cognitive motives are the dominant ones at preschool, the

child learns about things and phenomena by self-dependent activity, enters modelling in micro, meso and macro environments due to the observed behaviour of adults and peers.

The principle of support onto achievements is important for the child's attitudes fostering, which according to Robert Nemov's (1994) cognitions about the need of the child for evaluation of success after 3 year age, is significant psychologically and pedagogically at preschool. For developing of a self-dependent and responsible personality, the child needs to be provided with a free choice opportunity in its routine activity that is done with a variable success in kindergartens in Latvia. These principles are observed at the lectures read to students and in collaboration with children at music lessons at preschool by the author of the article, where collaboration is a process, while collaboration skills and positive attitudes are the result.

Pedagogical means for promoting positive attitudes

The pedagogical process is formulated as “purposefully organized, development promoting interaction involving the teacher and the learner, during which socially needed learning and upbringing tasks are being resolved” (Sphona & Maslo, 1991, p. 5). For the content of attitudes development was used a pedagogical process structural-model developed by the author, accentuating upbringing/self-upbringing correlation, which provides opportunities to the child to choose the most appropriate one for itself from the teacher's prepared materials in order to promote its self-development by individual tempo. (Liduma, 2015) (See the content of Attitudes upbringing in Picture 1)

| Collaboration by the teacher and the child in the pedagogical process | |
|--|---|
| The teacher as the model | |
| The child perceives, emotionally responds, imitates the model, enters activity | |
| Derives and learns knowledge, skills from the play session | By upbringing/self-upbringing acquires attitudes to: itself, others, nature, work, state, society |
| promotes self-experience and fosters its self-development | |

Picture 1: The content of attitudes development through collaboration at preschool (Liduma, 2016)

As the child's leading activity at preschool is play (Elkonin, 1989), the child promotes its development and attitudes by acquiring play-session content, observing and imitating adults. Therefore, the pedagogical process at preschool needs a well balanced integrated content of sessions, so that each child by interested self-dependent activity fosters its self-development.

At the beginning children attitudes in collaboration with adults are promoted by parents at home (in the micro environment), later at preschool age the model of the teachers (in the mezo environment) in the kindergartens and the models of adults and peers in the closest community (macro environment). By observing the activities of the surrounding people, gradually the child's attitudes are being developed to itself, others, nature, work, society and state (Sphona, 2006). Through the play-sessions, where different forms of work are being implemented, the children acquire new knowledge about themselves and society, in collaboration and acquire skills to use knowledge in their life activity. The content of both components of the pedagogical process mutually correlates and promotes the positive attitudes of children. The child's identity and self-perception are being fostered, all psychic processes are being promoted through the personally significant, purposeful activity. Through activity skills are being formed from the inborn faculties. The child promotes its self-development (Liduma, 2014).

At preschool there is the objective and subjective component in the upbringing process. The objective component of the upbringing process is formed by the following components: the goal (the predicted result, towards which they are striving – attitudes), means (content, forms and methods by assistance of which the goal is reached), results (the acquired product – attitudes).

At the educational upbringing the wholeness of the subjective component, which is formed by the child's development goal, needs, emotional experience, promotion of interests, volition and attitudes, is significant. Each child is unique, and its development opportunities are predicted by the inborn faculties, collaboration environments and the organization of educational upbringing. The external content through interioring (by reordering as its inner value) becomes personally significant through the process of inheritance in the collaboration of children – children – adults (parents and the teacher). The child observes personally significant phenomena or events, and on the imitation psychological basis inherits them as situational attitudes. At the upbringing process the positive experience of the child is important, which, through systematic repetition, grows into a habit. Therefore, a tender support is needed throughout the formation process of the child's attitudes at home, kindergarten and society.

A socially significant positive model is especially significant for the child in the process of self-upbringing as the child's personality is developing by satisfying its actual needs. Needs are a human's acknowledged and experienced necessity to anything that generates his/her life and promotes his/her personality development. Significant needs for the child development are communication with people, emotional contact with adults, actual information and opportunities to enter activity (Elkonin, 1989; Lisina, 1997; Sphona, 2006).

At preschool play-sessions the child satisfies its cognitive needs, acquires knowledge about nature, society, work, values; develops skills, acquires self-experience and miscellaneous attitudes. The teacher style of work promotes it. It has to be admitted that in practice the teacher's authoritarian style of work, being not seldom observed, demands unquestioning obedience, which causes fear, slows down the child's self-dependence and cognitive activity, sets limits to self-development and fosters formation of an executant development. Thus, the child from the very early childhood observes and gradually acquires negative attitudes towards other people.

The observed liberal attitude of the teacher at the preschool pedagogical process also promotes the child's spontaneous development. It has to be noticed that nowadays it is important to form such a social environment, where the child has opportunity to choose its growth and to self-realise the inborn potential, promote own development. The purposeful collaboration of the teacher and the child is needed for it.

By observations in practice of the children's attitude towards the activity for executing and by analysing own pedagogical self-experience (2004-2014), it was concluded that collaboration demands a democratic teacher's work style. It is absolutely different attitude to the child. At the preschool teacher's routine work it reveals itself as a promotion of the preschooler's development by the pedagogue's collaboration with the child.

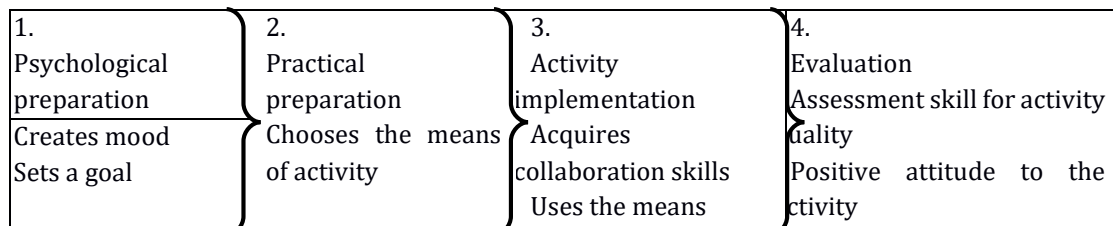
The position of the democratic teacher (indirect management/leadership, the teacher – a consultant and collaboration partner) at work with preschoolers provides opportunities:

- 1) to reach consensus on the content for acquiring with children;
- 2) to collaborate with the child by equal rights;

3) to advise the child to use diverse means;

4) to involve the parents in collaboration with the teachers and the child (Liduma, 2015). Then the children develop positive situational attitudes, which gradually get transformed into habitual attitudes. Therefore, as significant collaboration pedagogy means are recognized - the pedagogue's position and pedagogue's work style, pedagogical tactfulness and individual collaboration with each child.

It was established by the activity observations of pedagogues that nowadays adults (parents and teachers) have difficulties to enter collaboration with children. It was important to find reasons that impede the teacher to collaborate with the child. Comparing the information obtained at six conferences (2010-2016) of Latvia's preschool music education association, where participated 1000 respondents, from interviews with ten teachers of different ages and based on the pedagogical self-experience assessment (2004-2014) of the article's author, it was concluded that the teachers desire to achieve a faster child development result, meanwhile, the attitudes of each child are developing differently and individually. It causes the collision of the teacher's desires with opportunities to implement them. The inner conflict causes the outer conflicts and limits collaboration with the child. However, it is necessary to promote the children's habitual attitudes and self-regulate collaboration at the diverse pedagogical situations at preschool. Thus, the child's need to self-organize the day, to acknowledge its actual needs, to set the goal, find the means for resolution and to gain a result is promoted in the child. It is important to promote the child's positive attitudes in a definite succession: to create a precondition for entering an activity, to set the goal, to choose means, to proceed with the activity. The gained result brings satisfaction of the accomplished, promoted activity evaluation skills and a positive attitude to activity (see Picture 2).



Picture 2: Attitudes development of the child through collaboration

The child's positive attitude is manifested by the skill to purposeful self-dependent activity, to proceed towards the goal, to gain a result and assess it. The positive attitudes are promoted by the satisfaction caused by the accomplished. Nowadays amid the ever-changing social conditions in order to supply an actual support to the positive attitudes, the teacher needs organizational, scientific and communicative competences (knowledge, skills, attitudes, self-experience) in the teacher and the child collaboration development in the pedagogical process.

Conclusions

Collaboration in contemporary preschool pedagogical process has to be actualized as a pedagogical means, an education and upbringing method, an upbringing principle, a social skill and a personally significant value. Habitual attitudes gradually are being developed by on equality based, the teacher and the children collaboration in the activity situations. Therefore, the collaboration principle as the basic demand in pedagogy for the teacher and the children collaboration throughout the four stages of the upbringing activity is the means of developing and promoting of positive attitudes. Implementing collaboration as an education and upbringing method, children's self-experience and

comprehension of collaboration is promoted as personally significant value. The self-regulatory skills are being developed and promoted through personally significant collaboration.

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