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PEDAGOGICAL PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES OF REFLEXIVITY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS ABILITIES

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ABSTRACT: This article analyzes different approaches to defining reflection and reflexivity. The mastery of intellectual operations reveals the role of reflexivity in the development of abilities. The operational aspect of reflection is emphasized in the article. The study is premised on the expectation that the effective realization of intellectual activities and the development of abilities determined by these activities are conditioned by adequate reflection on conscious acts directed toward the performance of educational-cognitive tasks.

KEYWORDS: Activity subject, ability, reflection, reflectivity, development, intellectual operations.

INTRODUCTION

To define the role of reflexive mechanisms and to facilitate the acquisition of intellectual operations are the main tasks in developing abilities. In addressing these tasks, one needs to keep in mind two considerations. First, reflexivity as the basic element of subjectness is part of its structure. However, the series of experiments reported here shows that the process of students' subjectness and of their development of abilities has been inhibited by a low level of reflexivity development in all age groups. There is thus a need to investigate in detail the process of reflexivity formation in learning activities.

Second, the process of acquiring abilities and intellectual operations in learning activities is based on mechanisms of reflexive analysis of that activity and its separate components (motivation, goal, personal meaning, information base, decision making, program, and implementation). One cannot consciously and intentionally develop abilities without reflection. The process is determined by students' analysis of their own mental acts, by understanding when and how to use certain intellectual operations, and also by understanding the consequences of doing so. Learning through ability development is based on reflexivity of intellectual activity. Reflection helps students acquire higher mental functions.

Authors who are interested in investigating personality traits have often referred to reflection as a process. They understand reflection to include such phenomena as self-awareness, rethinking and revising one's train of thought while doing something and estimating cause-effect relationships based on actions, words, or deeds that refer to a series of interconnected events.

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The term reflection (from late Latin reflexio - bent back') means introspection, comprehension, estimation of premises and conditions during the course of a person's activity and inner life. In philosophy reflection has been differently defined. The English philosopher John Locke defined reflection as a source of special cognition when the observation refers to an inner act of consciousness, but a sensation has outer things as its object. For the German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, reflection is what we experience when we place our attention on what is happening within us. Carl Jung made an attempt to conceptualize reflection in terms of ideas. He defined ideas as the reflection on impressions gained from without (Frolov, 1986).

Taking into account this diversity of views regarding reflection, one has to conclude that reflection is characterized in general by its orientation to our inner world. This world is experienced with diverse features and manifestations, such as emotional states and feelings, shame experiences, and acts of consciousness (Shadrikov, 2006).

My research emphasizes the operational aspect of reflection. I believe that the effective realization of intellectual activity and the development of abilities determined by this activity are conditioned by adequate reflection of conscious acts directed toward the performance of educational-cognitive tasks. A student's orientation to an inward plan of intellectual activity can lead to the increased effectiveness of this activity and its further development and to reproduction in other conditions and situations.

To better understand the nature of reflection and its role in the development of cognitive ability, it is necessary to address the analysis of thinking activity, in the course of which the reflection of single mental processes (intellectual operations) and their results are realized. In the works of the great Russian scientist, philosopher, and psychologist Sergey Leonidovich Rubinshtein, the nature of a mental process reveals itself in an action or an act that is oriented toward performing a task. The task includes the goal of an individual's mental activity, which is correlated with the conditions set by that goal. Having been directed toward a goal or toward the performance of a task, the mental act of any subject is based on some of the subject's motives. The starting point of any mental process is usually a problem situation. Human thought operates only when it is directed by a need to understand something. A problem situation or an issue, a surprise or a perplexity or a contradiction initiates thinking as a mental process. The person's involvement in the thinking process is defined by the problem situation. Thinking is always oriented to problem solving (Rubinshtein, 1958). In line with these considerations we can conceive that the beginning of thinking has to imply its ending. Thus, a problem solution is an innate end of the thinking process. If the goal is not reached, the subject will feel frustration or lack of success.

The dynamics of thinking are related to the emotional well-being of the "thinking subject," whose mental state is tense at the beginning and is contented or relaxed at the end. Generally, real thinking relates to the whole psychic life of an individual. Because thinking is closely associated with practice and is derived from a person's needs and concerns, emotional phenomena and

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feelings, which are expressed in subjective experience and a person's relationship to the surroundings, are joined in any intellectual process and make it expressive. To follow Rubinshtein's view, it is not the thinking that thinks but a human being, so feelings occur in any thought.

Here I refer to Rubinshtein to underline key points for further understanding what thinking is. The first point is that one cannot analyze thinking without the thinking subject. It is the human being who thinks, rather than the thought. The person is involved in thinking. The second point is that any thinking, because of its structure, is an action directed toward the performance of a task. According to Rubinshtein, the needs and deeds of a person, the goal (which is part of the task), and the conditions (that set the task) are the elements that constitute the structure of action. The third point is that thinking arises through consciously regulated operations, or, more exactly, it is shaped by a system of intellectual operations. And the last, fourth, point is that consciousness of the thinking process is provided by critiques and checking. Rubinshtein pointed out that the whole flow of thinking is determined by a subject's awareness of the task that is performed during the thinking process. This process is experienced as the system of consciously regulated intellectual operations. Here, thinking, in contrast to any thought that might arise in the process of thinking, is correlated with the task that has to be performed by thinking and with the task's conditions.

In line with these points I believe that thinking as a process refers to thought production. Here I mean the thoughts that are further operated on by the subject in his or her thinking. In this context it is important to mention some suggestions of Rubinshtein and I. M. Sechenov, whose works have had an enormous influence on understanding the nature of thinking and the process of problem solving. To Rubinshtein a raised problem, in the whole set of its objective properties and principles, is involved in new relationships and thereby in making new relationships and characteristics that are fixed in new understandings. Thus, a problem is likely to draw out new content and is likely to be turned every time onto a new side. This is close to what Sechenov (1952) outlined by saying that each turn of a topic and drawing out of content is a new thought. Hence a set of thoughts characterizes the content of a topic. All these processes generate psychic content. Undoubtedly this content is enriched at the expense of assimilating ideas, but these same ideas are assimilated productively if they are associated with perceptions.

To enrich the content of an action or deed, thinking works with psychic content, which might be consciously or unconsciously conceived. This work is done by using intellectual operations. The process is characterized by motives, goals, and by programming, decision-making (working with schemas), checking, and controlling processes.

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