

PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF TEACHERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISORDERS

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ABSTRACT

The paper discusses emotional intelligence as a factor of effective teaching. Emotional intelligence, in broad interpretation, is defined as the ability to differentiate between positive and negative emotions, and the ability to change one's emotional condition from a poor to a better one. Internal and external components are inherent in the emotional component, and they can provide stress protecting and adaptive functions of this integral concept. Also it highlights psychological characteristics of teachers working with children with developmental disorders. Psychological requirements for specialists who work with individuals with special educational needs include psychological willingness of a personality for this work. This willingness can be considered as an integrated quality of a personality including a system of motivation, knowledge, skills, certain experience, personal qualities that ensure successful activity.

Key words: emotional intelligence, emotional awareness, empathy, emotion recognition, psychological characteristics of a personality.

Development of the issue of intellectual emotions and feelings during the development of psychology as an independent science has found its place in the works of such prominent psychologists as Friedrich Beneke, Alfred Binet, Edward B. Titchener, William James, Théodule Ribot. The latter ones try to interpret intellectual emotions as characteristics of feelings; „intelligent perception”; a product of sublimation of sexual experiences; pleasant, unpleasant or mixed states that accompany mental processes. Thus, in the first decades of the twentieth century the study of emotional phenomena from various perspectives has been carried out abroad, however problems of intellectual emotions and feelings has not seen further development.

Further development of the issue of unity of intelligence and affect is reflected in the works of such psychologists of our country as Lev Vyhotsky, Sergey L. Rubinstein, Paul Yakobson, Aleksei Leontiev. L. Vyhotsky confirms the existence of a dynamic semantic system that represents the unity of affective and intellectual processes. Thus, existence of a logical connection between mental and emotional processes is recognized in our psychology, and preconditions for further research on emotional regulation of mental activity are created.

At the present stage of society development the issue of competence in understanding and expressing emotions of teachers appears quite poor, since the cult of rational attitude towards life is artificially imposed. Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer first proposed a definition of emotional intelligence – a group of mental abilities that promote awareness and understanding of one’s own emotions and emotions of people around.

A correction teacher is a specialist who works with children with abnormalities in physical and mental development. The correction educator is engaged in teaching, educating children with developmental abnormalities and their social adaptation. Teaching of the psycho-correction educator requires conviction, profound and versatile knowledge, considerable general culture, clear teaching orientation, love for children, thorough knowledge of theory and being familiar with training and education practice. Emotional intelligence plays an important part in teaching.

Psychological requirements for specialists who work with individuals with special educational needs includes psychological willingness of a personality for this work. This willingness can be considered as an integral quality of a personality including a system of motivation, knowledge, skills, certain experience, personal qualities that ensure successful activity. The structure of psychological willingness of a personality includes five functionally related and interdependent components as motivational, cognitive, operational, evaluative and personal.

Professional qualities that demonstrate specialist competence in working with individuals with special needs are distinguished as follows (Kolupayeva, 2009, p. 155):

- knowledge of special pedagogy and psychology, methods for working with people with special educational needs;
- knowledge of their developmental characteristics;
- ability to find an individual approach to such people;
- ability to collaborate with other specialists and use their advice;
- flexibility in choice of working forms and methods most relevant to a particular person;
- work experience and skills to communicate with such people and their families;
- a great skill, high proficiency level, ability to resist difficulties and to find a way out of complicated situations;
- adequate perception of individuals with special needs.

The notion “special needs” is to be understood as follows:

Firstly, it is a necessity of sometimes extremely specific survey methods of teaching and communication of special education or defectology, rehabilitation, occupational therapy and special treatment while teaching. *Secondly*, special devices are also needed as supportive equipment for walking, wheelchairs, hearing aids etc. *Thirdly*, social insecurity of these children. More frequent than others, such children are threatened to become orphans or to face parental abandonment, school denial of their training and getting vocational education, employment denial and, after all, they come to be excluded from society as a whole. However, in

general, the needs of disabled children are absolutely common which can be and should be satisfied within each humane society. Therefore, tolerant admission of individuals with special needs into society is important.

Inclusive education involves creating an educational environment that would meet the needs and capabilities of every child regardless of his mental and physical development characteristics. Inclusive education implies a flexible, individualized system of teaching children with characteristics of psychophysical development within a secondary school by place of residence. Training is held according to an individual curriculum, every child should be provided with medical, social, psychological and pedagogic support (Hrabovska, & Ostrovska, 2011, p. 77). Inclusive education is intended to include students with developmental characteristics into educational work in regular secondary school classrooms. According to the needs and capabilities of every student, an inclusive class teacher or another specialist as psychocorrectional teacher who has an appropriate skill level provides assured support to those students who need it, implement personally oriented approach to their training arrangement. An important prerequisite for quality education of children studying within inclusive form is to adapt the school (administration, teachers, most students) to the needs and capabilities of every personality and to create conditions of psychological comfort in the new environment. Disclosure of potential capabilities of children with mental and physical disorders depends not only on forms of education (boarding school or inclusive), although they define a different degree of social adaptation. It also increasingly depends on flexibility of a special education system, the level and range of services that meet the above-mentioned children's needs (early detection of disorders, a unity of diagnosing and developmental correction, succession of preschool, school and post-school education etc.)

According to the researcher Vitali Bondar the following questions remain debatable as:

- whether a secondary school is ready to accept a child with developmental characteristics into a group of students, to psychologically join different groups of children in the educational process, to identify and implement individual goals that meet their needs and capabilities;
- how to create favourable conditions for providing integrated psychological, educational and social support under conditions of collaborative learning of students with different cognitive capabilities in a process of group activity and their socialization (Bondar, 2011, p. 12).

Therefore, it is not enough for a specialist in social work to have special training. On the contrary, his job description should meet the standards of a special psychologist and a correctional teacher that would secure their fulfilment of educational, teaching, diagnostic, prognostic, preventive and basic preventive correctional and psychological educational correctional functions regardless of a type of institutions a child attends – either social rehabilitation centres or special pre-school/school institutions etc.

It should be noted that introducing children with characteristics of mental and physical development into a single system of teaching and education requires special

personnel training, advanced training and retraining of defectologists. In return, it requires development and implementation of new, specific approaches to techniques of educational process arrangement, making of instructions needed to train specialists to be working in special institutions, and making of curricula and conditions for teaching and education of the mentioned children. Most of them, because of peculiar mental and clinical presentations, a disorder in rate and time of certain mental functions forming, especially at an early age, cannot attend child care institutions. In this regard, parents bear great responsibility for arrangement and implementation of correctional actions with a child at home. Therefore, it is necessary to provide them with complex highly skilled assistance and to begin it as soon as possible.

Social environment is known not to be ready to interact with a personality who is not willing to communicate with children and adults, avoids group events and who is not able "to get infected" with group emotions like laughter, joy, good mood, etc (Shulzhenko, 2010, p. 32). Therefore, a high level of emotional intelligence is an extremely important component of psychological characteristics of a personality, particularly specialists working with individuals of developmental disorders, since empathy implies a response of one personality to feelings of another and plays an important part in interpersonal interaction.

Empathy includes several levels as (Philipchuk, 2001, p. 59):

- first level involves cognitive empathy which manifests itself as understanding a mental state of another person (without changing your own state);
- second level implies empathy not only as understanding an object status but empathising with him, that is emotional empathy;
- third level comprises cognitive, emotional and behavioural components.

This level involves interpersonal identification that is conscious and effective.

Empathy is a significant quality of specialists working with individuals with mental and physical developmental disorders, as it enables them to get into the inner world, problems, feelings of a person with developmental characteristics. Having realised ideas, opinions and beliefs of such a personality, you can influence forming of personality qualities and encourage social activity.

Researchers P. Salovey and J. Mayer suggested an emotional intelligence structure which includes four components that describe four branches of emotional intelligent abilities, namely (Salovey, Mayer, 1990, p. 187):

1. discriminating, perceiving and expressing emotions (ability to identify emotions by facial expression, a tone of voice, body language; ability to monitor own feelings in real time and understand them; emotional awareness, that is the ability to identify emotions in oneself and others; ability to accurately express oneself, to clearly and efficiently use emotions while communication);
2. facilitating thinking by using emotions (ability to adequately use emotions in the process of thinking, problem solving and decision making; ability to realise how to think more effectively using emotions; potential ability of emotions to direct a personality to what is important and necessary to think);
3. understanding emotions (ability to solve emotional problems, to identify and understand correlation between emotions, thoughts and behaviour);

ability to understand value of emotions and change one state into another);

4. managing emotions (ability to use emotional information, to arouse emotions or protect oneself from them, to manage own or other people's emotions).

Thus, P. Salovey and J. Mayer presented emotional intelligence as a model of abilities, that is the idea of emotional intelligence as a crossing of emotions and cognition.

The concept of a known emotional intelligence researcher Daniel Goleman also refers to a mixed model of emotional intelligence that combines various personality characteristics. D. Goleman notes that emotional intelligence is the ability to be aware of own and other people's emotions to motivate oneself and others, to skilfully manage emotions being alone and while communicating with others (Goleman, 2007, p. 158).

Besides, David R. Caruso, Howard Gardner, Robert K. Cooper, Ayman Sawaf were among western scholars who studied emotional intelligence. Gregory Breslav, Eleonora Nosenko, O. Philatova, Dmitry Lyusin were emotional intelligence researchers of our country.

Emotional intelligence, in broad interpretation, is defined as the ability to differentiate between positive and negative emotions, and the ability to change one's emotional condition from a poor to a better one. The structure of emotional intelligence should single out two aspects as intrapersonal and interpersonal. Thus, on the one hand, it is the ability to understand, analyse and control own feelings and emotions, on the other hand, to be able to perceive, realise and control mood of the environment. Internal and external components are inherent in the emotional component, and they can provide stress protection and adaptive functions of this integral concept. Criteria for assessing forming level of emotional intelligence are to be found in interaction of its internal and external components. It can be expressed as prevailing components over each other or their harmonious combination. Based on the above, emotional intelligence forming levels are to be distinguished as follows (Lyusin, 2004, p. 34):

1. A low level of emotional intelligence: emotional responses due to a conditioned reflex, activity with prevailing external components over internal ones, low self-control, high situational conditionality. Low level emotional intelligence is characterised by fear, loneliness, instability, aggression, guilt, depression and frustration.
2. A medium level of emotional intelligence: free activity and communication on the grounds of volitional efforts, high self-control, certain emotional response strategy. Medium level emotional intelligence is characterised by psychological well-being, a positive attitude to oneself and high self-esteem.
3. A high level of emotional intelligence corresponds to the highest level of human inner world development. It means that a certain clearly realised value system was made by a human activity. High level emotional intelligence is characterised by inner freedom, responsibility for oneself, and the most important thing is that a person feels a high level of psychological well-being and is in harmony with self and people around.

A psychological research involved 60 teachers of Lviv secondary schools aged 30 to 45 including 30 special teachers (19 women and 11 men) and teachers of comprehensive schools (№64 and №65) of the same age group and N. Hall methods of identification of emotional intelligence level was used.

According to results of N. Hall methods of identification of emotional intelligence level it was determined as follows: 67,2% of correctional teachers are of a high level of emotional awareness, 20,4% - of a medium level and 12,4% - of a low level. Instead, 45,2% of secondary school teachers are of a high level of emotional awareness, 30,1% - of a medium level and 24,7% - of a low level. It indicates that correctional teachers are of a higher level of emotional awareness than secondary school teachers. 65,3% of correctional teachers are of a high level of emotion management, 19,4% - of a medium level and 15,3% - of a low level. Instead, 42,4% of secondary school teachers are of a high level of emotion management, 38,5% - of a medium level and 19,1% - of a low level. It indicates that correctional teachers are of a higher level of emotion management than secondary school teachers. 63,2% of secondary school teachers are of a high level of self-motivation, 18,6% - of a medium level and 18,2% - of a low level. Instead, 59,2% of correctional teachers are of a high level of self-motivation, 22,5% - of a medium level and 18,3% - of a low level. We may conclude that teachers of researched groups are of a high level of self-motivation. 62,1% of correctional teachers are of a high level of empathy, 26,7% - of a medium level and 11,2% - of a low level. Instead, 63,4% of secondary school teachers are of a high level of empathy, 22,4% - of a medium level and 14,2% - of a low level. It indicates that teachers of researched groups are of a high level of empathy. 60,3% of correctional teachers are of a high level of emotion recognition, 25,1% - of a medium level and 14,6% - of a low level. Instead, 59,3% of secondary school teachers are of a high level of emotion recognition, 24,5% - of a medium level and 16,2% - of a low level. We may consider that teachers of researched groups are of a high level of emotion recognition (see Fig. 1.1.).

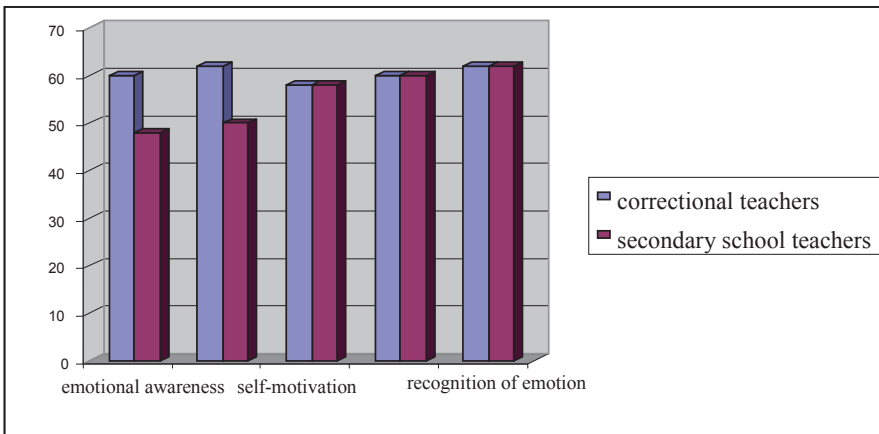


Figure 1. Differences of psychological qualities of correctional teachers and secondary school teachers.

Source: Own chart.

We may conclude that correctional teachers are of a higher level of emotional awareness and emotion management than secondary school teachers.

SUMMARY

To successfully solve important tasks a correctional teacher who is a psychologist as well, should have such personal qualities without which working with children with special educational needs seems to be impossible as: (1) teaching sensitivity to be expressed in the ability to detect any changes in mental activity, behaviour, general condition of a child by the least significant signs and to adequately respond to such changes; (2) patience and persistence in achieving set goals in working with children with developmental disorders; (3) firmness, consistency, self-discipline and teaching sense of tact. Emotional intelligence plays an important part in teaching. Emotional intelligence is a human ability to perceive and express emotions, to facilitate thinking by using emotions, to understand and manage emotions, since teaching implies understanding the emotional condition of children with special educational needs to establish contact with them. Correctional teachers and secondary school teachers are of a high level of empathy and self-motivation. Correctional teachers are of a higher level of emotional awareness and emotion management than secondary school teachers. Teachers of the researched groups are of a high level of self-motivation, empathy and emotion recognition.

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