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"School Readiness of the Child" as a Pedagogical Category: the Theoretical Analysis

Khrystyna MYKYTEYCHUK[1]

Abstract

The given paper highlights the lexical-semantic analysis of the concept "preparing the child to school" by the contrast and comparison of existing psychological, educational, philosophical, reference literature definitions. It determined the synonymous use of the terms "training to school", "school readiness" and "school maturity". The work showed the essence of training to school as a set of pedagogical measures aimed at the overall development of the child, creating conditions for the foundations of general abilities and skills that would assure the child the comprehensive personal development as a subject for future training activities.

Keywords: primary education, school readiness of the child, propaedeutics (preliminary study).

Articulation of the issue

Transition of the child to the preschool age from kindergarten to school is an important step in his/her life. Usually this period is associated not only with the entry of a new status, opening new opportunities but difficulties that arise when entering it into the new social environment and changing the leading type of the main activity. Successful resolution of this problem depends on adapting the child to school life, mastering its training activities and, consequently, the formation of fully developed personality. Therefore, nowadays, school readiness is an urgent problem.

Analysis of key studies and publications

The problem of child's school readiness has always been and remains the important issue among psychologists and teachers. This issue is investigated in such works and studies as Ya. Komenskyi, K. Ushynskyi, S. Rusova, A.Makarenko, P. Blonskyi, V. Sukhomlinskyi, G. Lublinska, Ey.

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Tyteyeva, N. Lubenets, L.Bozhovych, L.Venger, D. El'konin, O. Zaporozhets, N. Golovan and others.

The **purpose of the article** is in showing the essence of the concept "school readiness of the child" that is based on lexical-semantic analysis.

The main material

The essence of school readiness of the child, his/her main goal, priority areas, main ways of implementation in the current conditions of personal oriented approach and humanization of the educational process are defined in the legislation and regulations that govern the operation of Ukrainian education system, in particular their pre-school and primary mediator.

Compulsory of pre-school education and training of preschool children to study in schools is legislated by the Law of Ukraine "On Preschool Education" (2001): each child at the end of preschool age should get such general education, which "provides diverse development of the children according to their instincts, inclinations, abilities, personal, mental and physical characteristics and cultural needs; formation of the child, social adaptation and a willingness to continue their education"(Koval, 1999).

"The basic component of preschool education in Ukraine" (1999) contains clear requirements to prepare the child for life. Its main demand is to "ensure the personal development of the child, his/her life and social competence as a measure of personal maturity, ensure of complexity, continuity between preschool and primary general education (The basic component of preschool education in Ukraine, 1999).

However, at the clearly defined goal, the question remains unrevealed about how the school readiness of children is provided. Therefore, the problem of preparing the child to school and is still relevant because of several reasons quite difficult to research. Despite considerable interest in the question of child's school readiness, and still in teaching science there is not well-defined categorical apparatus on the phenomenon.

L.A. Venger believes that "school readiness is a certain set of knowledge and skills, where should be all the other elements, although their level of development can be different" (Venger &Venger, 1994). He claimed that school readiness it is not to be able to read, write and count. Be prepared for school it means being ready to learn all this.

Scientists in defining the essence of the concept "child's school readiness" often turn to its structural parts. Thus, L.I. Bozhovych stated that " school readiness has recognized level of mental activity, cognitive interests,

readiness to arbitrary regulation, their cognitive activity, the social position of the pupil" (Bozhovych,1972).

A.V. Zaporozhets developed similar views, who emphasized that school readiness is an entire system of the individual child interdependent qualities, especially including its motivation, level of cognitive, analytical and synthetic activity, and the degree of formation mechanisms of volitional regulation.

The multidimensional development of children in preparation for school also notes L.V. Ishchenko (2010), which defines "school readiness as psychological, emotional, moral and volitional and physical development of the child, which provides its easy adaptation to a new stage of life; it is the elimination (or at least substantially reduction) of the negative impact on the health and emotional well-being of the pupil, the difficulties of transition to new living conditions, social relations and a new type of leading activity" (Kravtsov &Kravtsova,1987).

I.O. Lyubarska states the functional characterization of the notion of child's school readiness. She notes that "the willingness to learn is an important outcome of education and training of preschool children in prime school and family". School readiness of the child, according to the scientist, is determined by the system requirements set by the school to the child. The nature of these requirements is motivated by "the features of the new social and psychological position of the school-child with new duties which should be ready to perform" (Lyubarska,2011).

The analysis of scientific literature and practical experience of educational activity show that synonymous terms are often supposed to be as follows "training to school", "school readiness", "school maturity" and there is sometimes very significant divergence as for their concepts interpretation.

Comprehensive analysis, contrast and comparison of existing psychological, educational, philosophical, definitions in reference literature have shown the value of the basic concepts.

Russian-Ukrainian and Ukrainian-Russian Dictionary by S. Ozhegov reveals term "training" as the stock of knowledge, skills and experience gained during training and practice (Shvedova,1988). However, in the context of general scientific such an approach is considered in some way archaic.

Let us consider the essential features of a training process. The essential feature of the process is moving forward, consistent, regular change of objects, phenomena, the course of a phenomenon; a set number of consecutive actions to achieve a certain result. Training, as a process, is the entire insurance of necessary readiness for implementing of something.

Thus, in the context of general scientific training as a process of preparation of everything necessary for something that is characterized by consistency, focus and irreversibility.

The analysis of reference literature on the notion "training" shows that close to is the content of the concept of "propaedeutics". By the definition that is given in the Grand dictionary of foreign words, propedeutics (to teach beforehand) is the preparatory classes of the introduction to science. Great Dictionary of Foreign Words also allows the definition of "Propaedeutic course that is preparatory systematically described in a concise form that precedes a deeper study of a particular subject" (Large dictionary of Foreign words, 1999). It gives us strong reason to continue in our study to use the terms "training" and "propaedeutics" as synonymous.

According to the analysis of numerous theoretical and methodological and scientific-methodical works, many scientists define training as the formation of school readiness. However, they emphasize that pre-school training is not a process of "knowledge accumulation" (Illyashenko, Obukhivska,&Stadnenko, 2002), and "the purposeful process of formation identity" (Savchenko, 2001). Polish scholar I. Adamek in preparation for the school focuses on training the child as a conscious process to stimulate preschool children's action, their positive motivation to it (Adamek,2001).

Most scholars state that integrative result of preparing children for school readiness should be learning in school, that is at the end of the childhood that contributes the successful adaptation to the conditions and requirements of the school.

The term "readiness" has recently gained wide use in scientific psycho-pedagogical meaning.

Most scientists, theoreticians and practitioners of teachers believe the purpose of the process of preparing is the school readiness of the child.

In the modern sense, the notion "willingness to learn" is considered as a synonym to "school maturity" of the child by some scientists. From their perspective, the school readiness of the child and school maturity is determined only by nature, but it is different as a phenomenon: readiness is a state of potentialities and therefore the ideal abilities of the child; school maturity is a state of actual and real opportunities (Bezrukykh &Efymova, 1991).

O. Bayer and O. Syrovatko stress "when it comes to admission of children to school at an age of six or appropriateness of deferred admission for one year, then talk about the output level of operational readiness or ill-preparedness or school maturity. When the determination aim of the

readiness is the early identification of children who will need extra attention from the teacher and who require an individual approach taking into account certain identified features of their training, in addition to operational readiness, it is spoken about psychological and social willingness to learn. When the goal is to develop an individual program for pupil development or to set the correctional education classes then we define school readiness of all components: morphological, psychological and social" (Beyer &Syrovatko, 2003).

We suppose the view by T. Ponimanska to be valuable for our research who distinguishes the structure of child's school readiness as general (psychological) and special.

The analysis of scientific and educational researches shows that the overall school readiness of children reflects the comprehensive development of the child and it is the result of a long collaboration of the family and primary schools. A special training contributes to gain specific knowledge, formation of skills necessary for learning subjects in primary school. In the modern pedagogical theory, general and special trainings are not opposite and are not mutually exclusive. However, the priority is given to general training i.e. providing motivational, intellectual, physical, emotional and volitional and social readiness.

A number of studies highlighted the school readiness within special training to master school subjects that future pupils will learn in elementary school, namely Mathematics (Z. Doroshenko, M. Docheva, L. Levinova T. Stepanova, O. Funtikova, E. Shcherbakovata etc), the native language (A. Bogush, K. Krutiy, N. Makovetska, A. Petryk etc), Science (A. Bogush, V.Ilchenko, L.Makridina etc), and artistic and aesthetic course subjects (N. Vetlugina, N.Kolentseva etc).

In our view, it is appropriate to consider training as a holistic process of education, training and development of child, resulting in school readiness and ensuring the continuity between pre-school and primary levels of education.

The concept of continuity in the philosophy is determined as the necessary link between old and new in the development process.

The principle of continuity includes the specification for the transition from preschool to elementary one that allows us to formulate it by the following way: the educational process at the stage of preschool and primary educational links should provide fluent, natural transition from preschooler to the position of a junior pupil.

In pedagogical literature the continuity of preschool and primary sets of education is defined as "a space for implementation in the educational process of preschool and school unique, dynamic and prospective system of

education and training of elder preschoolers and primary school children" and "takes into consideration the level of the children with which they come to school"(Karpov, Goncharov,& Kuzmin, 1980). Continuity and prospects between preschool and primary element is a principle of preschool and the necessary condition for continuing education of the child that provides training to new, but with preservation and development of the necessary and expedient old, the connection between old and new as the basic gradual development (Karpov, Goncharov.,&Kuzmin,1980).

As it is noted by O. Savchenko, to implement continuity in school readiness process it is necessary to preserve the "intrinsic value of preschool child" and create "conditions for the successful formation of educational activity of the first-grade pupils" (Savchenko,2001).

According to I. Adamek, training children to school becomes effective if there is scientific justification features of the process and requirements for its content, organizational forms, teaching methods based on transformation historically and socially constructed by the best pedagogical theories and methods; consistency is taken into account and education relationship of preschool children and adequate pedagogical conditions in which the process is fulfilled; the tasks are realized for children's school preparation in preschools interaction with the family; teacher's work is determined by the needs and abilities of children and the conditions of the social environment; the awareness and critical application are maintained within psycho-pedagogical concepts, theories and methods of the past and objectively are compared to them with current priorities of different research directions for the organization preschool training and education (Adamek,2001).

The notion of school readiness is given in a letter of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine of 18.12.2001. "On the organization of children under school age who do not attend kindergartens", it is understood as "a set of educational activities aimed at the overall development of the child (physical, mental, intellectual, emotional, moral and volitional); creating conditions for laying the foundations of general abilities and skills (organizational, intellectual, communicative), which would ensure a child the successful training activities not only in the first grade, but also in the next life stages" (Law of Ukraine "On Preschool Education", 2001). However, taking as a basis the above definition, we consider it necessary to note that we understand training as a two-sided process in which the child acts as a subject.

Conclusions

Summarizing the definitions and interpretations available in modern psychological and pedagogical literature allows us to understand the school preparation as a set of educational activities aimed at the overall development of the child (physical, mental, intellectual, emotional, social, moral and volitional,); creating conditions for the foundations of general abilities and skills (organizational, intellectual, communicative), which would ensure the child a holistic personal development as a subject for perspective training activities. The result of the preparation process considers the readiness of the child to school i.e. a total maturity of personality, which allows the child to be engaged in systematic learning process and successfully assimilate its contents as a whole system properties and qualities that they should acquire preschoolers in their motivational, physical, mental, emotional and volitional, and social development.

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