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Developing the conflict competence in teacher education students

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Today conflict knowledge, skills and competences are seen as the necessary condition for the professional effectiveness of an educator. Analysis of national educational standards of higher vocational education in various fields (humanities and sciences) showed that 98% of them list the following functions of the graduate among the most important: networking among involved actors and a complex of knowledge, skills and competences in the field of conflict management. Therefore, conflict training should become a priority in the process of a graduate's professional development, the foundation of his/her successful professional adaptation.

Modern training of teacher education students suggests the competence approach in training and education.

The European Commission recommends taking into account eight key competencies to be mastered by every European. These include: 1) competence in the mother tongue; 2) competence in foreign languages; 3) mathematical and fundamental, science and technology competence; 4) computer competence; 5) educational competence; 6) interpersonal, intercultural and social competences and civic competence; 7) entrepreneurial competence; 8) cultural competence.

This research is based on the assumption that interpersonal communication is an integral part of a teacher's professional work and one of the factors of its effectiveness.

In the context of drastic social change, the rapid development of new social knowledge and skills and gaining the social competence are becoming more and more essential. The structure of the social competence includes the communicative and verbal competence, the socio-psychosocial competence and interpersonal orientation, the ego competence and the social competence as such (the operational competence) [Kunitsyna, Kazarinova, Pogolsha 2001]. An integral part of the socio-psychological competence is the ability to resolve conflicts. Effective behavior in a conflict is considered as a component of the overall communicative competence of the individual and is referred to as the conflict competence [Grishina 1993].

The term "conflict competence" has several meanings in psychology and conflictology. Besides, it can be defined in different ways depending on the context in which this term is used. There is not a single understanding of the conflict

competence either. Different authors use the terms "conflict competence" (Л.А Петровская / L.A. Petrovskaya, Б.И. Хасан / B.I. Khasan), "conflictological competence" (Н.И. Леонов / N.I. Leonov, В.Г. Зазыкин / V.G. Zazykin, Л.Н. Цой / L.N. Tsoi) or "conflict resistance" (А.Я. Анцупов / A.Ya. Antsupov, А.И. Шипилов / A. I. Shipilov).

For example, B.I. Khasan (Б.И. Хасан) defines the conflict competence as the ability to keep the contradiction in the productive conflict form that facilitates its resolution.

A.Ya. Antsupov (А.Я. Анцупов) regards conflict resistance as a person's ability to organize his/her behavior in difficult situations of social interaction in the best way and solve problems arising in relations with other people without conflicts.

In our research, we believe that the conflict competence should not be confused with the "conflictological competence". The conflictological competence, or the competence in resolving another person's conflict, is a complex integral unity. This competence is a type of the communicative competence and has its essential characteristics: structural complexity that has an integral character; connectedness with the structure of the communication process and its effectiveness; dynamic structural components and the possibility of their development [Leonov 2010].

From the perspective of the conceptual analysis, L.A. Petrovskaya (Л.А. Петровская) examines the conflict competence as part of the communication competence and in the context of a practitioner psychologist's tasks to improve communication.

Different levels can be distinguished in the conflict competence as an integral unit: the level of personal values, the level of personal motives and attitudes and the level of skills. Human values have a decisive influence on the nature of communication and are strategic guidelines in conflict practice. In reality conflict experience is related to a very strong motivation. In fact, not only the intensity of the action, but also the direction and the way of behavior depend on the motivation.

Besides, in the conflict competence, we see a certain set of social stereotypes and attitudes that society uses to set the attitude to the conflict.

Another important indicator of the conflict competence is the cultural level of self-regulation, especially the emotional one. Its indicators can include, for example, a sharp tone, raised voice, the use of insulting words, the use of negative personal evaluations, etc. The destructive potential of the emotional factor is usually displayed through the violation of all aspects of communication in conflict situations: social perception accuracy, communication and action adequacy.

Basing on the synthesis of theoretical and empirical data on the issue of the conflict competence, we have identified the following structural components:
− cognitive (knowledge is associated with getting to know another person, includes the ability to predict the behavior of another person and solve various

problems that arise between people at different stages of the conflict effectively);

– motivational (personal orientation to the constructive resolution of the conflict);

– emotional-regulatory (includes emotional responsiveness, sensitivity to another person, consideration of one's own actions and the actions of partners);

– behavioral (behavioral strategies in the conflict, reflects a person's ability to cooperate and engage in joint activities, adequate communication style).

Therefore, developing the conflict competence is now the subject of scientific reflection and a practical task of training programs. However, the issue of developing the conflict competence of university graduates as the basis of professional adaptation has not been raised yet.

The aim of further research is to identify the conditions and to create teaching techniques that encourage the development of the conflict competence in university students.

The study object is the development of the conflict competence.

The hypothesis of the study was the assumption that the conflict competence as a kind of the communication competence of students will develop successfully if:

1) the curriculum includes creative individual tasks contributing to the development of the cognitive component of the competence;

2) the pedagogical interaction is based on group forms of the educational process and the problem interactive teaching methods;

3) the learning tool is a multimedia web-site.

Methods of research: psycho diagnostic methods: questionnaire "Mediation capacity of a manager to resolve conflicts between employees" (N. Leonov), the questionnaire "My behavior in the conflict" (C. Thomas), interpersonal diagnosis (T. Leary).

In order to diagnose the learning outcomes a questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire includes the description of conflict resolution methods and techniques adequate to the suggested situations.

QUESTIONNAIRE (full name)

1. Descriptive part

For me, **conflict** is

For me, conflict resolution is

Describe a situation you were involved in according to the plan below:

– persons involved (gender, age)

– where the situation developed (at home, when you were with friends, etc.)

– actions (what was said, what was done)

– how the situation ended

2. Analytical part

1. What was the reason and what was the cause in the described situation?

_____

_____

2. Was it a conflict or a conflict situation?

_____

_____

3. How could this situation have been resolved?

_____

_____

4. Did you want to resolve the situation in a positive way?

_____

_____

5. If no, what obstructed?

_____

_____

6. I behaved:
– aggressively
– properly
– offensively
– indignantly

– I gave in
– I agreed
– I negotiated
– I gave up

Results of the pilot research

The pilot research involving students showed:

1. About 60% of the respondents do not have a structured idea of the conflict or ways to resolve it.
2. More than half of the respondents have no idea about the consequences of conflicts either with peers or with teachers/professors.
3. They do not have an idea of the most appropriate strategies and tactics of their behavior in a conflict situation.

Program for further research

During the first stage, the task associated with the development of a multi-media educational tool based on the example of the Conflictology course (author

N. I. Leonov) was completed. The multimedia course is designed with the following tools: Adobe Photoshop, Joomla 1.5.22, Macromedia Flash 5, Pinnacle Studio 14, Nero Wav Editor.

The multimedia leaning tool was developed. It includes video lectures (author's course by N. I. Leonov), creative tasks for working in small groups, interactive media (theme chat room and forum). The control means are tests. The course is designed to be used by full-time students for self-study and by professionals as an introductory course on conflictology. This course can be well embedded in the distance learning system.

Thus, so far a program for the development of the conflict competence in teacher education students has been designed and validated scientifically, and it is currently being implemented in the university education process.

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Abstract

The conflict competence is considered as an element of the communicative and social competence. The structural components of the competence are defined on the basis of synthesis of theoretical-empirical data on a problem of the conflict competence. The author gives grounds for a program of the development of the conflict competence in teacher education students.

Key words: conflict, competence, conflict competence, structure of conflict competence.