

PEDAGOGY

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The notion of "giftedness" in Ukrainian pedagogical discourse

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Abstract. The article reveals the approaches of Ukrainian researchers to the definition of the notion "giftedness". According to the Law of Ukraine "On Basic Foundations of State Support of Gifted Children and Youth in Ukraine" gifted is referred to a child under the age of 16, who is the winner of the city, regional, national or international Olympiads, contests or competitions, and has an official written confirmation of such victory. Also a child can be considered gifted if he is awarded a gold medal for excellent achievements during his/her study in general secondary school; a child who took part in at least three all-Ukrainian or international Olympiads, contests or competitions, and has an official confirmation of such participation. It is emphasized that the definition of the notion "giftedness" given by Ukrainian researchers differs significantly from the definition given in the legal document, because it covers different aspects of this notion. It is enclosed that the main approaches to the definition of the investigated notion in the native pedagogical discourse in modern conditions are qualitative and quantitative.

Keywords: *giftedness, gifted child, notion, pedagogical discourse, education of gifted children*

Introduction. Today in conditions of increasing competitiveness of national education the development of intellectual and creative potential of citizens is very important for economic well-being of the country. In Ukraine one of the issues of state education policy is support of gifted schoolchildren, the necessity of which is proved in Laws of Ukraine "On Basic Foundations of State Support of Gifted Children and Youth in Ukraine" "On Education", "On Higher Education", "On Pre-School Education", "On General Secondary Education", "On Out-of-School Education" and other legal acts.

The Law "On Basic Foundations of State Support of Gifted Children and Youth in Ukraine" is aimed at creating favorable conditions for active development of children's talents, their intellectual and physical abilities. It is emphasized that this law guarantees gifted children and youth possibilities for intellectual, cultural, spiritual, social and economic development in the country [5].

Taking into consideration the importance of the problem different aspects of gifted and talented education in Ukraine and abroad have become the issue of special interest of such native scientists as O. Antonova, O. Bezv, A. Bida, O. Bocharova, O. Burov, M. Galchenko, Yu. Gotsulyak, Yu. Hryshchuk, N. Drobotenko, V. Kamyshyn, M. Milenina, L. Popova, A. Sbruieva, B. Stryghalkovska, P. Tadeyev, N. Telychko, V. Volyk, I. Voloshchuk, S. Yermakov and others.

The purpose of this article is to reveal the approaches of Ukrainian researchers to the definition of the notion "giftedness".

Results and their discussion. According to the Law "On Basic Foundations of State Support of Gifted Children and Youth in Ukraine" the gifted child is a "child under the age of 16, who is the winner of the city, regional, national or international Olympiads, contests or competitions, and has an official written confirmation of such victory. Also a child can be considered gifted if he is awarded a gold medal for excellent achievements during his/her study in general secondary school; a child who took part in at least three all-Ukrainian or international Olympiads, contests or competitions, and has an official confirmation of such participation [5]. It should be noted that vision of giftedness of Ukrainian researchers some-

what differs from the definition given in the law, because usually it covers different aspects.

For example, a native researcher O. Antonova explains giftedness as an individual potential originality of innate (qualities), social (appropriate educational space) and personal (positive "I"-concept, appropriate volitional qualities, focus, persistence, etc.) prerequisites for the development of individual abilities to the level above "average", owing to which he/she can achieve significant success in a certain area of activity [2].

The researcher has carried out a comparative analysis of approaches to teaching gifted children and youth in the developed world and the post-soviet countries. She identified the main strategies for teaching gifted children according to two main approaches: quantitative ("speed-up strategy", "strategy of intensification") and qualitative ("strategy of enrichment"). O. Antonova classified special education programs for gifted children: enhancing, correcting, compensating models that focus on the strengths or weaknesses of the individual, or reinforce strong to compensate for the weak [2].

O. Antonova developed the model of giftedness based on the theory of abilities formulated by native researchers, which indicates the existence of anatomical, physiological and functional characteristics of a person (inclinations), which creates prerequisites for the development of individual psychological characteristics, which distinguish one person from another (abilities), the development and improvement of which takes place in the process of purposeful activities. The developer of the model has taken into account the main provisions of *sociogene approach* regarding the role of environment, society in the formation of outstanding ability; basic ideas of *physiological approach* concerning specifics, structure and functioning of the central nervous system; *axiological approach*, according to which giftedness is determined by the meanings of the individual consciousness. Important is also *acmeological approach* aimed at study of a personality as a holistic phenomenon in its essential unity of the parties (individual, personality, identity); orientation on constant self-development and self-improvement, motivation for high achievement, pursuit of high performance, success in life; creative human activity at all stages of continuous education, the creation of necessary conditions for the

realization of creative potential. The author considers appropriate to use *synergetic approach*, according to which there is a certain self-organization of creativity in the society, which determines its need and creates social niches for people of different levels of creativity [1].

Other Ukrainian researchers – O. Burov and V. Kamyshyn – emphasize that giftedness as a phenomenon is manifested in a particular area of activity or in a number of areas in the form of successful activity. Like the previous author they prove that achievement of certain results that can be measured in qualitative degree (as a rule), or quantitative (indicators of direct activity or performance of special diagnostic tests). In the latter case there is a necessity to have general results of evaluation of such an activity for all children, as well as a quantitative measure of its performance of a particular child [3].

There is a great number of definitions of the notion "giftedness" in Ukrainian pedagogical discourse. Giftedness is considered to be a qualitatively special combination of abilities. Giftedness is also a set of common abilities that result in broad possibilities of a person, level and originality of his/her work. On the other hand, giftedness is an intellectual potential, a holistic individual characteristic of cognitive abilities for learning. In addition to the above mentioned, giftedness is a combination of inclinations, characteristic of the degree of expression and originality of natural preconditions of abilities. Sometimes giftedness is associated with internal conditions for outstanding achievements in some sphere. Giftedness is considered as a high level of development of personal abilities that allows the person to achieve special success in a particular activity. Giftedness is a talent to specific activities and unique creative abilities. Giftedness is a high level of intellectual and academic abilities.

In I. Voloshchuk opinion, the term "giftedness" means that pupils have unusual abilities to learn independently and to think abstractly and independently. Giftedness is not discrete but continuing phenomenon, it cannot be said whether it exists or not, because everyone is gifted to a definite degree. Today it is also assumed that the degree of talent is the result of work of the person, owing to which something new is created or opportunities are open for easier reaching something that was done before with greater expenditure of time or energy [4].

The researcher outlines the following signs of giftedness:

1. Curiosity, a thirst for knowledge.
2. Intellectual activity.
3. The desire to learn, to explore the world; manifestation of persistence.
4. Hypersensitivity to the problems, the ability to see these problems where others do not see them.
5. Cognitive independence, constant immersion in the problem.
6. Preference to divergent, unusual, informal tasks with numerous variants of answers.
7. The flexibility and productivity of thinking.
8. Building associations easily, metaphoric thinking.
9. The ability to predict events.
10. High concentration.
11. Excellent memory.
12. A large amount of knowledge.
13. The ability to systematize the experience.
14. The criticality of thinking.

15. Sustainability and awareness of the interests.
16. Broad interests.
17. Perfectionism – the pursuit of excellence; dissatisfaction.
18. Social autonomy – independence from the opinions of others.
19. Cognitive egocentrism ("everyone should be as curious as I am").
20. Tolerance for others' drawbacks.
21. Management and organization of group activities; the desire for leadership in young age; when a person gets older he/she prefers to be a "free artist".
22. Competitiveness.
23. The ability to be at the right time in the right place (good luck comes to those, who is ready).
24. Sense of humour [4].

In her turn I. Karabayeva lists signs of giftedness, focusing at intellectual giftedness, namely:

- sharpness of thinking;
- skills of observation;
- versatile curiosity;
- ability to express his/her opinion;
- knowledge of what his peers are not aware;
- exceptional ability to solve problem situations;
- fast mastering of basic concepts;
- easy memorization and retention of information [6].

It is common knowledge that identification of gifted children, who have certain abilities, is a complex problem. In the psychological literature there are two approaches to solve it. The first is based on the common system of assessment and provides the use of the tests. However, the limitations of this method are reasonably covered in studies by many researchers. Therefore, most researchers and practitioners use an integrated approach to the identification of giftedness that is based on methodology. I. Karabayeva describes methods of evaluation of intellectual sphere of the children of preschool age:

- direct observation;
- informal observation;
- individual interviews, questionnaires;
- tests using survey;
- standard intelligence tests;
- sociometric tests;
- recording of live events;
- journals with written fixation of conduct, statements;
- records of examples;
- records of activity [6].

In academic publications on the issue of gifted children the criterion of measuring giftedness is its comparison with other children or average level of pupils, but it is not always formalized, what should be understood by average values. O. Burov and V. Kamyshyn argue that this definition requires clarification, which depends on the number of tested, i.e., the group, in relation to which the question of talent of a particular child is set. The assessment should be carried out in relation to the following groups: age; ethnic (regional); gender; professional (specific institutions, for example, mathematical lyceum). These simplified criteria can be used to obtain quantitative degree of talent of the child. The researchers stress that quantitative evaluation should be based on creating and using a database of assessments of successful activity of a sufficiently large number of children of particular age or professional-

ly oriented (social, gender and so on) group. In this case assessment of giftedness of the individual child or group of children can be used to individualize their training and education. The authors draw to the conclusion that:

- 1) assessment of giftedness should be a systematic assessment of the child's development;
- 2) evaluation of a gifted child should be based on quantitative assessments of an average level of development of psycho-physiological, academic, social and other indicators of a relevant groups;
- 3) the level of child's giftedness can be calculated as the capacity of development of his/her separate and general qualities;
- 4) the relationship of individual and average group values of the individual and general indicators allows to estimate the general and special giftedness of a child [3].

On measuring giftedness using non-experimental methods of research insists I. Karabayeva. Among the non-experimental methods the author names:

- 1) personal characteristics of preschool children. Observations in different types of activity, surveys of parents and teachers, interview with the child;
- 2) intellectual sphere;
- 3) observations in classroom, questioning parents and teachers, interview with a child;
- 4) psychological factors affecting manifestations of giftedness;
- 5) observations in different activities, surveys of parents and teachers, conversation with a child, talk with his/her pediatrician;
- 6) study of the influence of community (the type of family and social education);
- 7) observations for the work of teachers organizing different activities, surveys of parents and teachers, interview with a child [6].

Many native researchers study gifted education in foreign countries, especially in the USA and Great Britain. The research devoted to the study of gifted children in the United States was implemented by N. Telichko. The author analyzed the organization of education of gifted junior schoolchildren in the USA, focusing on the theories of intelligence as basic theoretical and practical approaches to identifying gifted and talented pupils based on the index IQ. It is established that absence of clear psychological-pedagogical definition of the concept "giftedness" and understanding of its content has led to socio-economic orien-

tation of its interpretation, which reflected somehow in recent decades in state education policy of the USA concerning gifted and talented. Accordingly, the scope and content of work with this category of pupils using special educational programs was determined by the amount of funds allocated by the government for their implementation. Among the main directions of implementation of the educational policy of the United States concerning the training of gifted elementary school pupils, the researcher highlights the transformation of children and youth education in the status of American civil religion for the education of each next generation of citizens makes them not only self-confident, but also creative, ready for continuous self-education and self-development [8].

Famous Ukrainian researcher A. Sbrueiva in the article "Gifted and talented education: organizational foundations and trends in the development of international cooperation" characterizes the activities of international organizations in the field of gifted and talented education and trends of international cooperation in this sphere. She analyzes economic, social-political, academic factors that actualize the problem, the mission and the main activities of the leading international organizations, primarily European Council for High Ability and the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children. Among the activities the author names conferences, professional education programs, research journal, newsletters, courses, summer schools, professional awards, international days/weeks/years etc. The researcher emphasizes that international cooperation in the field of gifted and talented education has multi-level, multi-disciplinary and multi-subject character [7].

The conclusions. Thus, the results of the analysis of the native research works on the problem of giftedness show that there is a number of definitions of the investigated notion. Some authors consider giftedness to be a qualitatively special combination of abilities and other ones define giftedness as a set of common abilities that result in broad possibilities of a person, level and originality of his/her work. Great attention of the native researchers is paid to measuring giftedness using qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Taking into account the fact that the article has covered one aspect of the problem of giftedness the objectives for further research can be the study of views of foreign researchers on the problem of giftedness, the theories of giftedness in native and foreign pedagogical and psychological literature.

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Бойченко М.А. Понятие "одарённость" в украинском педагогическом дискурсе

Аннотация. В статье раскрыты подходы украинских учёных к определению понятия "одарённость". В соответствии с Законом Украины "Про основные принципы государственной поддержки одарённых детей и молодежи на Украине" одарённым считается ребёнок до 16 лет, который является победителем городских, региональных, национальных или международных олимпиад, конкурсов или состязаний и имеет официальное письменное подтверждение такой победы. Ребёнок также по закону считается одарённым, если его наградили золотой медалью за отличные успехи во время обучения в средней общеобразовательной школе; ребёнок принял участие в по меньшей мере трёх всеукраинских или международных олимпиадах, конкурсах или состязаниях и имеет официальное подтверждение этого участия. Подчёркнуто, что определение понятия "одарённость" украинскими учеными значительно отличается от сформулированного в нормативном документе, поскольку охватывает различные аспекты данного понятия. Выяснено, что основными подходами к определению исследуемого понятия в отечественном педагогическом дискурсе в современных условиях являются качественный и количественный.

Ключевые слова: *одарённость, одарённый ребёнок, понятие, педагогический дискурс, обучение одарённых детей*