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ENSURING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY OF MODERN CHILDREN IN PEDAGOGICAL INTERACTION

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Abstract. The study focuses on the organization of pedagogical interaction with modern children in the context of ensuring their psychological safety. New challenges and threats related to the digitalization of all areas of life are considered, which must be taken into account in the organization of pedagogical communication and management of interaction with children of Generation Z. The scientific novelty lies in the fact that the question of the psychological safety of children in the educational environment is approached from two angles: age-psychological and information-pedagogical. The first approach is based on taking into account the specifics of Generation Z when interacting with it, while the second approach involves the prudent use of digital technologies in education, taking into account the risks and threats that may arise from their use. Traditional teaching methods are being reconsidered due to the new challenges of the digital generation and educational innovations. It is emphasized that teachers should develop pedagogical skills, increase their competence, and develop a value-based attitude toward children's personal development. The identified risks and threats represent a particular aspect of pedagogical work that ensures children's psychological safety in the learning process.

Keywords: *personal development under the conditions of digitalization, new threats and risks, psychological safety for children, the pedagogical authority of adults, pedagogical interaction*

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Psychological safety in the pedagogical environment is traditionally defined as “a state of psychological safety from any kind of violence that contributes to the satisfaction of the desire for interpersonal trustful communication, creates a referential conventionality of the environment, and ensures the psychological health of those involved in it, as well as the ability of a person and the environment to reflect external and internal influences (ability to protect oneself from threats and to be able to establish a psychologically safe relationship)” [1].

Given the new challenges and threats, the problem of describing markers and indicators of psychological safety in the educational environment is currently of great importance. On this basis, it is crucial to create pedagogically meaningful interactions between teachers and students [2, 3].

In the scientific literature, threats are “considered as possible or real phenomena, events and processes capable of harming or even destroying individuals, social groups, nations, societies, states, human communities, and the earth, impairing their well-being, destroying material, spiritual or natural values, leading to decay and hindering development. A threat is defined as a danger in the transition stage from possibility to reality, expressed by some subjects to harm others” [4]. Analyzing threats and dangers in terms of the characteristics of psychological safety in the educational environment reveals the interaction between two sides: the subject, who is the source of the danger, and the object at which the threat or danger is directed.

Today’s challenges in ensuring psychological safety in the educational environment include a number of problems caused by new living conditions (including those related to the rapid dynamics of the digitalization of education), the socio-economic and political situation, and other fundamental changes. Overcoming these challenges is the priority task for developing the national education system based on traditional Russian values and creating versatile conditions for the personal development of the young generation. These issues are reflected in articles by such scientists as V.V. Kovrov [5].

In our research framework, markers refer to psychological manifestations observed in students at different levels (emotional, cognitive, motivational, and personal relationships with oneself and others), indicating signs of psychological safety or the presence of various dangers and threats in the educational environment. The publications of V.V. Iokhvidov, T.M. Krasnyanskaya, and V.G. Tylets [6] analyze subjects’ psychological safety indicators.

An indicator is a value that combines several parameters and allows the evaluation of psychological phenomena, actions, or activities by a corresponding criterion, especially if it is formalized. It is possible to assess the degree of psychological safety in the learning environment by analyzing these characteristics. They are studied in publications of such scientists as Dmitry Yuryevich Gumenyuk and Andrey Vladimirovich Tsvetkov [7].

Let us consider the issue of ensuring the psychological safety of modern children in pedagogical interaction with them from the perspective of two approaches. The first is age-psychological and considers the features of socialization and psychological development of the contemporary younger generation, usually referred to as Generation Z (or Gen Z) according to the concept of N. Howe and W. Strauss [8].

Generation Z (Zoomers or the digital generation) were born in the early 2000s and are now coming into the world. What characterizes them regarding communication and personal characteristics that affect how they interact with others? Firstly, they engage in Internet communication and rely on digital technologies. Secondly, their maximum immersion in various sources of information while lacking information processing skills. Thirdly, their introversion. Fourthly, their insatiable desire for recognition on the one hand and their hypersensitivity to criticism on the other. And finally, their pursuit of pleasure and the fact that they get everything out of life. These characteristics

harbor risks that can harm communication and interaction with modern children, even in education [9]. Let us examine this in more detail.

Scientists note that only among Zoomers can such a large number of introverts and autistic individuals be found. While many Gen Z representatives are open to live communication, they prefer online interaction. The lack of experience with real interaction risks lowering social and emotional intelligence and hindering the development of normal relationships, including in the educational process.

Generation Z is a social individualist and finds it difficult to integrate into groups of people. Considering that the traditional Russian education system focuses on personal development through group activities, including modern children in these can be quite problematic.

Many publications point out that Zoomers are not the personalities they look up to, but scientific statistics prove the opposite. According to a survey conducted by the educational platform Maximum Education, “Rosgosstrakh Zhizn,” and the bank “Otkritie,” the majority of modern schoolchildren aspire to become bloggers like their idols who earn a lot of money [10]. So modern children do have authority figures, but they do not come from school textbooks or children’s films (which have hardly been produced in the CIS countries in the last 30 years or are made according to Western patterns that are unsuitable for us). The ideals of Gen Z come from the Internet, from the socialization environment that has become very important for modern children. And that is another risk.

Spontaneously emerging Internet leaders who set lifestyle trends and ways of self-expression tend to be sensational, aggressive, and flamboyant, with behavior that deviates from societal norms. They attract a youthful audience by emphasizing rebellious attitudes and getting out of control not only for adults but also for law enforcement. What educational effect do they have on modern children and young people? We believe it is negative.

The desire to get “likes” on the Internet transfers from Zoomers to real life, and they expect the same from their teachers. At school, however, they will have to understand that praise is valuable if you have done something important, necessary, or useful or have improved your results. Painful sensitivity to criticism prevents some children from responding appropriately to the teacher’s fair and tactful remarks. They perceive everything as a conflict, as a deliberate desire to humiliate them. And they take it all very seriously. Moreover, teachers may not raise their voices, express criticism in a sarcastic tone, or use gaslighting, which are the signs of a psychologically insecure pedagogical environment.

The consumerist approach to life and the prevailing focus on the satisfaction of hedonistic values among youth, which has been shaped by the transformative changes in our society over the last 30 years under Western influence, are not in line with traditional Russian values and often contradict the ideals of spiritual and moral education from the Soviet era. Therefore, it is a crucial task of today’s education system to respond to the values and needs of the modern generation, incorporating all socialization institutions, including the

media and the Internet. As L.I. Bozhovich noted, the formation of a personality should begin with the formation of its needs [11].

The second approach refers to information and pedagogical methods that go hand in hand with digitalizing all areas of human activity. Information flows are shaping the lives of today's youth, and the insufficiently controlled online environment impacts various cognitive, motivational, emotional, and behavioral levels. This is where students today search for information, make friends, and meet their idols and role models. The threats and risks associated with using digital technologies in the educational environment are diverse, ranging from copyright infringement and information overload to the lack of age restrictions for certain online materials with inappropriate, unethical, and harmful content and cyberbullying [12].

Modern teachers and teacher education students are interested in the following questions: How do we find the right approach for today's Generation Z children, considering the above characteristics? How do you find the right approach for effective pedagogical interaction with them? How do we build effective pedagogical communication?

Let us first clarify the question of the source of information. Nowadays, there are many sources of information, some trustworthy and some not. However, in educational institutions, the teacher has traditionally been the source of knowledge. It is their historical role and task to impart knowledge. In the modern world, however, children evaluate teachers according to the same principles as other sources of information: Can they be trusted? How sincere are they? Do they embody the values they promote? And so on. Therefore, despite the general decline in the social importance of the teaching profession in today's world, only those who are authoritative, sincere, and have the necessary personal qualities can reach children's hearts and influence students. After many years in which the teaching profession gradually lost its prestige and children's idols became well-known bloggers (who were often poorly educated and behaved badly) whom they admired and followed unquestioningly, it is quite a challenge to restore the authority of the teaching profession, but it can be done. It has to start with each individual. When does a teacher become an authority figure for children? First, when he is a consolidated personality and has the necessary pedagogical skills, such as love for children, genuine interest in their development, congruence, empathy, respect, mindfulness, and attention to children's mental states (since children cannot always verbalize what disturbs them in academic activities and interpersonal relationships), awareness of individual characteristics and more [13]. Teachers should have broad knowledge, love their subject, know how to focus on the subject matter properly, make the presentation of the information captivating and intriguing, and get the children to engage with the material themselves. "The teacher must be an actor, an artist who is passionately in love with his work," as Anton Chekhov wrote [14].

Some believe teachers will soon become superfluous because the Internet will completely replace them. However, we all agree that while there is a wealth of online information, not all of it is useful. When students search for

information chaotically, they can be overwhelmed with “junk.” They cannot recognize the essentials and absorb the available information uncritically. Therefore, teachers must teach their students to think critically about information. This was the focus of books by Soviet psychologists and the concept of developmental learning proposed by V.V Davydov and D.B. Elkonin, which primarily aimed to promote theoretical thinking and the ability to find generalized action patterns [15]. In my opinion, this enabled a significant breakthrough in the Russian education system in the middle of the 20th century and positioned it as a leader in the world of education.

As K.D. Ushinsky wrote: “If pedagogy wants to educate man comprehensively, it must first understand him in every way” [16]. A good teacher should do just that – study each child using a range of modern psychological and pedagogical methods, recognize their characteristics, and build individual interactions based on this understanding. If teachers approach students formally in an impersonal way without showing genuine interest in each individual, students will turn away from learning, making communication ineffective as it does not contribute to children’s personal development [17]. A teacher who is not interested in a child becomes uninteresting to the child. As Johann Wolfgang von Goethe remarked: “Everywhere we learn only from those we love” [18].

Secondly, personal examples are of great importance. Of course, there are many educational methods, but this method is one of the most effective. If teachers are genuinely passionate about their work, students will follow them, imitate them, emulate their activities, and improve. Modern children reject many pedagogical methods that rely on direct intervention, as described in the book by E.Sh. Natanzon [19] from the Soviet era – moralizing, commanding, instructing, admonishing, and even softer approaches such as advice or recommendations. They respond better to support, creating conditions for development and guidance as these methods create an atmosphere of trust and safety in which a child is not afraid to try new things, be ridiculed, or make mistakes.

Psychological safety is created when an adult focuses on the child’s zone of proximal development and starts something new with the child. In doing so, he gently and flexibly guides the student in the right direction, giving him hints and assistance where necessary, but without taking away his initiative or autonomy to discover new knowledge and gain personal experience, even through trial and error, which is ultimately the most effective and memorable method. By teaching and finding new knowledge together, through demonstration and personal example, the transition to skills takes place, and students develop the willingness to act independently.

We are not talking about scenarios of overprotection or constant success situations. The importance of equipping students with the ability to solve life’s problems themselves through learning situations is recognized. This requires problem-based technologies, case studies, simulations of real-life conditions, and the analysis of life experiences, both one’s own and those of others. According to A.Sh. Shakmanova, situations where the child feels

uncomfortable are beneficial even for preschool children. In this way, the child learns to be a subject and independently or with the help of an adult to solve a problem that arises or is deliberately posed to him [20].

Teachers should focus on the primary activities that contribute to the psychological development of children, as well as the main psychological training necessary for the transition to the next age level. Games, frequent attention changes, varied activities, and teacher support are essential for preschool children. It is vital that the child feels the caring gaze of adults who observe without intervening but are willing to help. Through interaction, children learn to understand other people's attitudes and to react appropriately. In this way, they gain mutual understanding and acquire an essential skill required for school – the ability to abide by standard rules, which is critical for academic activities [21].

Pedagogical activities led by the teacher are the primary method of development in elementary school. Since the teacher is the most important figure for children's normal and safe development, they must take an interest in the development of each child. Teaching embedded in communication is a key concept of modern education. Special attention must be paid to organizing pedagogical activities that promote interpersonal relationships. In primary education, the development of learning skills is closely linked to the quality of these relationships. Learning begins and flourishes in a mutually supportive environment, a concept we call 'pedagogical collaboration.' When a person learns to engage with multiple sources of knowledge – be it a book, a movie, a lecture, or a knowledgeable peer – in a meaningful way, they have truly mastered the art of learning. This ability to make connections between different media is essential for effective learning. [22].

For teens, communication with peers is critical to their normal development, both within and outside of the organized educational process, and this is reflected in their predominant motives. When it comes to teachers, they prefer to build partnership relationships based on trust and agreement, where the organizational role of the teacher is crucial [23]. It is important to consider the strong sense of independence that develops in students during this period and the accompanying mechanisms for asserting their boundaries (stubbornness, defiance of adult demands, escape from control, nihilism, protest behavior, rebellion) if interactions with them do not change on the part of teachers, who sometimes continue to use the same methods and approaches as in the early stages of education.

Teenagers' behavior becomes intolerable precisely because they have a strong need to enter the adult world and distance themselves from it to gain independence and autonomy. Where do they find the realization of this need? In the company of their peers, whose opinions now become more important and authoritative than those of adults. These are general patterns of normal psychological development of adolescents described in the works of scientists [24]. Numerous stories in the literature depict intergenerational conflict, with adolescents often blamed for not following the rules set by adults. However, few parents know the need to develop and change themselves to remain

important, interesting, and needed by their teenage children. At this age, a teenager needs the support of a wise adult, not in the form of instructions or orders, but as friendly advice from a sincerely interested companion who was once young himself and knows many examples of similar life situations that the teenager is facing today, but most importantly, knows proven ways to solve them.

High school students are most interested in valuable knowledge in their future profession or when applying to university. Teachers can demonstrate their pedagogical authority by mastering the subject matter, demonstrating their skills, and acting as mentors. They can also engage students in collaborative activities and project-based learning with real-world applications and tangible outcomes. Teachers can help students answer questions like “Who am I?“, “What am I like?“, “What skills do I have?” “What career should I pursue?” – that is crucial in this age of personal and professional self-determination [25]. One of the problems facing today’s students is the lack of answers to these questions, which leads to career choices being determined by external motives (the prestige of a profession, the expected income, the imitation of an idol).

Today, more than ever, it is necessary to promote the development of children, as A.V. Zaporozhets emphasizes. Immersing children in different activities, discovering each child’s abilities, and encouraging individuality are essential. “A true teacher is not the one who constantly educates you, but the one who helps you to become yourself” [27].

Teachers should recognize the predominant motives of each student (external, internal, social, cognitive, perceived, real, and meaningful). When working with modern children, you cannot force them to learn, and you must motivate them – stimulate, inspire, amaze, and encourage them to act. The basic attitude of the students should not be: “I have to” or “This has to be done,” but: “I want to do this.” Some pedagogical techniques described in the book by E.S. Natanzon (such as commanding, condemning, punishing, showing indignation, rebuking, gentle teasing, indifference, irony, and caricature, which were common in Soviet schools) [28] can demotivate modern students. When teachers distance themselves from their students and show no interest in them, this can cause students to become frustrated and lose interest in learning altogether.

Sometimes, adults and children attribute different meanings to the same situation, which leads to a lack of mutual understanding and creates semantic barriers in communication that hinder effective interaction. Therefore, these meanings must be identified, uncovered, and analyzed. This is possible by reading, viewing, designing, creating, and discussing things together. Gradually, standard semantics can emerge in communication, in which the personal meanings of each participant exist and change, making new, shared meanings for the group. Therefore, “lively” communication, dialogs, discussions, and debates are needed.

L.S. Vygotsky also emphasized the importance of a balance between emotions and intellect in education [29]. A teacher’s narrative should not be dry and overly theoretical. Learning should include humor and facts that evoke

different emotions in students – from admiration to disgust. Children must learn to recognize emotions, identify them in themselves and others, and practice self-regulation – without this, true spiritual and moral development is impossible. The teacher must be on the same emotional level as the students; otherwise, it is difficult to show empathy (we are also talking about pedagogical skills here). However, teachers must have their emotions under control and set an example of how to deal with various difficulties in life.

It is impossible to teach values that you do not possess yourself. For example, it is difficult to teach children a healthy lifestyle if the teacher smokes. As N.V. Gogol noted: “To educate others, we must first educate ourselves” [30].

Teachers must remain modern, engaged, and evolve with the students. They not only teach but also shape culture, anticipate future trends, and prepare students for self-realization in the world of advancing science and new technologies.

Lev Vygotsky emphasized that education should focus on the future of children’s development and not only on the present [31]. His words can be applied to the immediate sphere of individual growth and the prospects of entire generations.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that nothing good is achieved without love. In education, this includes love for children (students immediately sense the insincerity of a teacher who is not interested in their development and only goes through the material), love for the profession (without it, teachers will not address students as professionals) and self-love, self-respect, and dignity (otherwise, the teacher’s value as a person will be meager and he will never become an authority for his students). Leo Tolstoy once said: “If a teacher has only love for the cause, he will be a good teacher. If a teacher has only love for his pupils, like a father or a mother, he will be better than a teacher who has read all the books but loves neither the subject nor the students”.

Conclusion

To summarize, we have examined the characteristics of communication with today’s children within the framework of two approaches: the age psychology approach, which considers the characteristics of Generation Z when it comes to building pedagogical interactions with them, and the information pedagogy approach, which is about the meaningful use of digital technologies in education, considering the risks and threats that may arise from their use.

The identified risks and threats represent an essential aspect of modern teachers’ pedagogical work to ensure students’ psychological safety inside and outside the classroom.

Against the background of the digital generation’s modern socialization, upbringing, and education, we have examined the most critical psychological principles of child development and pedagogical practice, highlighting the difficulties that arise and showing ways to overcome them.

The teacher's attitude towards his work and growth as an individual and towards the children, expressed in communication and interaction, essentially embodies aspects of love. In an atmosphere of love, a child feels safe and comfortable and acquires the essential resources for healthy personal development.

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ОБЕСПЕЧЕНИЕ ПСИХОЛОГИЧЕСКОЙ БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ СОВРЕМЕННЫХ ДЕТЕЙ В ПРОЦЕССЕ ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ПЕДАГОГИЧЕСКОГО ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИЯ С НИМИ

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Аннотация. Актуальность состоит в изучении особенностей организации педагогического взаимодействия с современными детьми в контексте обеспечения их психологической безопасности. Рассматриваются новые вызовы и угрозы, связанные с цифровизацией всех сфер жизнедеятельности, которые необходимо учитывать в процессе организации педагогического общения и учебного взаимодействия с детьми поколения Z. Научная новизна связана с тем, что проблема обеспечения психологической безопасности современных школьников в образовательной среде рассматривается с позиции двух подходов: возрастно-психологического и информационно-педагогического. Первый из них базируется на учете особенностей поколения Z при выстраивании взаимодействия с ними, второй подход предполагает обоснованное использование цифровых технологий в образовании с основе прогнозирования рисков и угроз, которые могут возникать при их применении. Традиционные общепсихологические закономерности обучения, воспитания, личностного развития детей пересматриваются в связи с необходимостью учета особенностей цифрового поколения и современных условий реализации образовательного процесса. Подчеркивается важность повышения авторитета учителя, развития у него педагогических способностей, формирования ценностного отношения к развитию личности ребенка, профессии, себе как постоянно самообразующейся личности и профессионалу. Выявленные риски и угрозы составляют особый пласт воспитательной работы современного учителя в контексте обеспечения психологической безопасности детей в учебном процессе и за его пределами.

Ключевые слова: личностное развитие в условиях цифровизации, новые угрозы и риски, психологическая безопасность детства, педагогический авторитет взрослых, педагогическое взаимодействие.

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