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EDUCATIONAL SPACE OF POST-INDUSTRIAL WORLD AND PHENOMENON OF NEW CHILDHOOD

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Abstract

Post-industrial society gives rise to new trends in the socialization of children. The ideas of anthropology and Paidology allowed to characterize integratively the phenomenon of childhood, to form classical scientific theories of child development. In the changed conditions of post-industrial information world there is again a need for interdisciplinary research of children, which would make it possible to understand innovations in the socialization of the younger generation, more accurately describe the features of the child of our time.   Traditional education in the global post-industrial environment loses its importance, and the adult, teacher, educator ceases to be a significant mediator of experience accumulated in society. There is a need to identify effective education technologies for the emerging new childhood. An empirical study of the priorities of children of preschool and younger school age shows negative trends of displacement of a living human communication and its replacement with a computer analogy. At the same time children keep plasticity of mentality and readiness for real-life communication. However, a number of researchers predict evolutionary changes in the nature of the child under the influence of the new educational space. In this regard, the training of a childhood teacher should focus on the communicative aspects of communication with the child in the new post-industrial society.

1. Introduction

The reference to the problems of the educational space of the post-industrial information society, which generates new trends in the development of ideas about children and childhood, is naturally due to the need to understand the complex multidisciplinary context of modern childhood. The apology of childhood, which arose in the era of Enlightenment in the works of J.-J. Rousseau, has broken a gap in the classical concepts and traditions of the past, when the child was understood as being imperfect, waiting for adulthood, subordinated to parents and teachers. "Material for molding", "a clean board on which education can draw anything", "a wild plant whose harmful shoots should be cut off, and useful ones - instilled" – such metaphors were used by classical pedagogics characterizing children and their relationship with the older generation (Shirokikh, 2016).

The philosophy of J.-J. Rousseau is the first step of European pedagogy to describe childhood – this special ultra-important stage of human life, when he is not just closer to the ideal, but when he is the ideal. Three sources of education, named by J.-J. Rousseau (Rousseau, 1981) in the novel "Emile, or On Education" – the nature of the child (inherent biological instincts and needs), the things surrounding the child (objects of material culture) and people (carriers of the culture of society) – predetermined the development of pedagogics as an interdisciplinary field of knowledge. Interest in childhood as a special phenomenon that ensures the fate of civilization, reappears in the late 19th – early 20th century, accompanying the departure of the industrial era and giving the sciences of education of children an integral character. At this period appears the pedagogical anthropology of K.D. Ushinsky, who suggested the idea of understanding training and education as a universal science, accumulating the knowledge of various subject areas about a growing and developing person. Its projection on the area of childhood – Paidology – in the early twentieth century laid claim to the status of the new methodology of education, which raised topical issues and equipped scientists and practising teachers not only with the tools for learning children's development, but with the idea of paidocentrism (Blonskiy, 1934; White,1990; Hall, 1912,1982)

Another name to this new emerging science – applied philosophy of education – was given by S. I. Hessen, who defined its distinctive feature (Hessen, 1923).

This "pedagogy, which has grown to realize itself as an applied philosophy, establishes not the content of education, not didactic systems and methods of teaching, but the phenomenon of childhood as the primary problem..." (Kislov, 2002). It is the phenomenology of childhood in its integrity that has become the main agenda of the global philosophy of education of the twentieth century, as confirmed by the international Congress "Paideia: philosophy in the education of mankind", (Torosyan, 2006).

2. Problem Statement

Today, childhood needs a comprehensive study and an integrative pedagogical description, while we assume that the main changes are caused by the nature of the educational space in which the modern child lives (Shirokikh, 2016). The educational space in this case is understood as a certain context, a set of conditions and factors – spontaneous and organized, natural and cultural – which are perceived by the child, have a multidirectional influence on it and, ultimately, determine the essential features of the new childhood. As noted by S.V. Ivanova, the educational space is not synonymous to the concept of the educational environment, although they are often used as identical (Ivanova, 2016).

In our view, the educational space is a broader concept than the educational environment. The first to a large extent includes the subjective perception of everything that surrounds or acts as the inner nature of the child, the second is associated with specially organized conditions of socialization, and in this interpretation can be part of the space.

At the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, there is a need to clarify the essence and role of children in society, as it appears to us, teachers, as a phenomenon not fully disclosed, as well as in determining the technology of education of modern children, mechanisms of cultural transmission, corresponding to the needs of our time. The conclusions of futurologists, which predict the rapid transformation of traditional educational institutions (during the life of the current child population), widespread introduction of IT-technologies and the actual departure of a person (teacher, mentor) from the process of translation of social experience, attach particular importance to this problem. All this may, in their opinion, be accompanied by the disappearance of traditional books, letters, and even computer typing, as developing neurocognitive technologies will allow to transmit and receive information without resorting to such laborious methods. As Martin Merle, Deputy Director of the European Fund for management development, noted in his speech, globalization, smart devices and new media technologies are only a few factors stimulating the review of our ideas about education and preparation for life, about the skills that will be needed for our children to be productive in the future (Merle, 2017).

3. Research Questions

There are a number of questions aimed at determining what should be an effective education aimed at the future. To do this, it is necessary to identify the distinctive features of modern children, especially their socialization in the global information society, including the opportunities and impact of methods and technologies of education, as well as the content and nature of teacher training for the new childhood. One of the biggest threats of our time is that education loses its importance in the new post-industrial environment. In order to become a source of changes, the teaching function should be more related to non-formal learning and provide students with individual development paths that place special demands on the teacher, the educator. Currently, education as a complex process determined by society passes a certain point of bifurcation: either a transfer of experience as handling by consciousness and behaviour of children on the basis of information technologies, replacement of the instructor by the computer, robot (which has been already done in a series of countries), or occurrence of a new humanistic formation paradigm realizing necessity of compulsory participation of the person in preparation of rising generation for the life and the account of changes in person himself and around it. The first of the proposed options has long been predicted by such fiction writers, who are difficult to blame for the lack of realism, as A. Asimov (Azimov,1957), R. Bradbury (Bradbury ,1953), and today as a feature of modernity, futurologists and simply business and entrepreneurship specialists (Gref ,2017; Cherepennikov,2018 and others) note: the dangers of this scenario are associated with the possible reduction of the learning process to the primitive mechanisms of forced translation of knowledge and beliefs based on the use of information technologies of the third Millennium. It causes natural resistance of the teaching staff of universities not only because of the conservatism of the latter, but also because of the conservatism of organizational educational structures (Ivanova & Popova, 2017). The second option of the transfer of experience demands from the modern

teacher a deep penetration into anthropological features of modern children, as in the existing textbooks, a new pedagogy of childhood and technology of education in these terms are not described systematically enough. In this case, the innovativeness of technologies is connected with scientific search, therefore less exposed to the risk of rejection by experienced scientists and teachers. However, the implementation of a new humanistic paradigm also requires the abandonment of routine in professional activities, changes in the organizational structure of educational institutions, taking into account new phenomena of childhood. The researchers of the problems of professionalism note that the high level of professionalism of University teachers, including those engaged in the training of future teachers, is rather a positive factor in the introduction of innovations in technology and teaching techniques (Damanpour, 1991). This option seems to be more promising for the transformation of education, but requires the organization of studies of the new childhood.

4. Purpose of the Study

Based on the problem we formulated the goal: to identify and characterize the changes that occur in the educational space of modern childhood and children themselves in the context of modern culture and civilization. The study was conducted by teachers and students of the state educational institution of higher education of the Moscow region "State University of Humanities and Social Studies" within the framework of the faculty scientific theme, which has been implemented since 2006 up to now.

5. Research Methods

The methodological foundations of the research are connected with the understanding of the educational process as a person-oriented, carried out by people: a child as a subject of cultural self-development; a teacher as an intermediary between a child and a culture, able to support individual self-determination in the values of culture in the works of L. Vygotsky (Vygotskiy, 2005), E. Bondarevskaya and S.V. Kulnevich (Bondarevskaya & Kul'nevich ,1999), V.I. Slobodchikov and E.I.Isaev (Slobodchikov & Isaev, 2014) and others. Retrospective and comparative analysis, reference to memoirs and artistic texts of the past describing childhood and characteristics of children, analysis of scientific works of modern foreign and domestic researchers of childhood were used as methods of theoretical research.

The methods of empirical research were observation, conversation, questioning of parents and teachers. The empirical study was attended by about 350 urban pre-school children (3-6 years) and primary school children (7-12 years) during 2015-2017.

6. Findings

The empirical study was conducted by students of the pedagogical faculty of the University (future teachers of primary school, speech therapists, teachers of preschool educational institutions), as well as students of the faculty of vocational retraining, working in the system of preschool and primary education. For students and listeners it turned out to be not only a useful experience, but also a serious motivating factor to study, comprehend and take into account in their pedagogical activity the peculiarities of modern children. Researchers and students were tasked to remember their own childhood, to answer the same questions that were offered to modern children, to find common features and differences in generations.

The questions concerned what modern children love and what they fear, how they like to spend their free time, which games they play and what they read, what programs they watch, who their friends are, who they would like to become. The results of the study were expected, but nevertheless caused a vivid emotional reaction of students who themselves could still be considered children in accordance with the definition of a child adopted in the Russian Federation. The students were amazed at the qualities that showed them the growing new childhood represented by primary school students: "they are very different, not like us", "they are more free", "they do what they want", "they do not play the games that we played", "they do not play collective games at all, for example, on the street", "they are so quickly guided in any gadgets", "they are not afraid to speak, they have their own opinion", "many children are not afraid of anything at all", " they are not afraid of adults - teachers, educators, and we were scared", " they do not know who is the favourite hero of our childhood - Neznayka! ", "they have other favourite toys!", "they collect pink ponies and black coffins for their dolls!"

Despite the differences that surprised the students, there was a lot in common, especially in the pre-school period: love for mom, candies, birthdays, watching cartoons and playing with dolls or cars. Although the bulk of the children are not afraid of anything, some children under 6 years are still afraid of the same things as grown students were in their childhood: to get lost in the store, to remain alone in the room, darkness, spiders, sharp sounds, ghosts, injections, wolves and dogs, and something new, but in the old way: "angry birds", "monsters" or "that alien will take mother away" (students admitted that, in addition to all this, they were afraid of gypsies and being punished with a belt). The closest to the children of the past were 3-4-year-olds, which is explained by the early stage of their ontogenesis, when biological rather than socio-cultural characteristics are more clearly expressed, and their educational space is limited only by the closest people and kindergarten. These children demonstrated mainly a commitment to classical descriptions: they like to play with toys (cars, dolls), to run, in the kindergarten they play grown-ups (role-playing games). But they have very different cartoon characters.

The main essential features of the new childhood were the desire for individual play with gadgets, tablets, phones, computers, profound ignorance of outdoor games and games for the children's company, the heroes of children's books and dislike of reading (with rare exceptions), but excellent knowledge of modern cartoons and computer games. None of the children named any children's magazine (students have strong memories of wonderful magazines of their childhood "Murzilka", "Funny pictures").

During the interviews children of 6-12 years of age called a lot of different computer games as their favourite activities and desirable pastime. The analysis of this new cluster of the educational space of modern childhood in terms of their possible benefits for the development of the child was a separate task of the study. Students evaluated suggested online computer games for children of preschool and primary school age. Along with the computer analogy of pre-existing board games or graphical games (e.g., tic-tac-toe, battleship, super-trimming, bubbles, coloring books with cartoon characters, designers, puzzles, etc.), which are of a developmental nature to the same extent as their non-computer predecessors, other games were found that are labeled "3+" (i.e., intended for children over 3 years of age). For example, "Surgery" (virtual Surgery), which can be played online without registration, where it is very realistic to cut something off, cut into pieces, cut the various organs of a person under the pretext of life saving. Game "Subway": you are to leave graffiti on the walls of subway cars, run away from the police on the roofs of cars and

tunnels, dodging trains. Games "Parkour", "Extreme runners" and others like them, which pose a risk to life if you repeat all this not in the virtual, but in the real world. This is what many modern children are trying to do, running on roofs, jumping from high-rise buildings, clinging to buses and cars, paying with life. The loss of real perception of the world, the feeling that you can realize everything brought from the computer world of fairy tales. Maybe that's why, according to the students' research, kids today are "free" – in the world of computer games everything is possible and nothing happens, there is a second life, you just have to "save yourself". And it is quite scary when there is free access for preschoolers to the games of bullying-type: "Undermine the rabbit in a deep trench," "Darts Sadyushka" (to hurt a kitten) or "Operation Hurt 2". The description of the last game on the site reads: "Push the person at a certain angle, so that he could break all his body parts. Complete all levels with the maximum level of bullying!" (Flesh-igry online, 2018) .Such games contribute to the development of negative and aggressive qualities in a person, which would be better sublimated in real sports, requiring appropriate qualities. The influence of such proposals of the Internet leads to the emergence of imitators posting in social networks real bullying of animals, classmates, elderly people.

7. Conclusion

The results of the empirical study demonstrate the trends of childhood changes associated with the new socio-cultural educational space, in which information and communication technologies, gadgets, games have taken a significant place, replacing live human communication from education and children's spare time. Many parents participating in the empirical study express concern about the child's constant "hanging-up" in social networks, surfing on the websites of network games, reducing the time of communication with peers and close adults. The obtained results and conclusions correlate with the impressions of domestic and foreign researchers of childhood, fixing new needs and preferences of children in different countries (Van Undenkhoven, Vazir, 2010; Polivanova & Sazonova, 2013; Shirokikh & Shirokikh, 2017)

There is a term "new childhood", the most universal characteristic of which is called building communication bypassing traditional mediators (families and schools), which is now possible due to the Internet. The creators of computer games, traders, dedicated to promotion of gadgets and distribution of modern network technologies, in fact, become an extension of their value systems among children in accordance with the laws of profit and advertising. The main measure of the "usefulness" of the game is profit, popularity, marketability. Often adults are faced with escapism - "escape" of a child from the real world to the virtual world (Puyu, 2016), it is so difficult to resist the synthesis of the image, color, sound, dynamics and constant reinforcements in the form of bonuses, points, coins during the game.

At the same time, as it appeared in the course of the study and as its results allow to judge, the biological nature of the child has changed little. The plasticity of the psyche of children allowed our students-researchers to quickly include them in the moving games of the past, which they were unfamiliar with. Children continued to play them on the street and at recess, even a year after the end of direct communication with researchers. However, many researchers expect that eventually all these new devices will lead to an evolutionary leap, to the change of neural connections of our brain, and children will already have a different nature (Geri & Gigi, 2011; Karr, 2012)

Summing up the results of the study, we can summarize that the teacher should be ready for changes in the socio-cultural situation of childhood and the new qualities that the younger generation demonstrates. Without questioning the benefits of technological progress, we believe that the main mission of the adult generation is to take care of childhood and the emotional sphere of the child. Forming a new human technology in the process of learning, you should do it with a proper sense of care, while maintaining the experience of the past. Unfortunately, moderation in the use of new e-learning and information technologies is often lacking. Despite the fact that, according to many futurologists, the need to be able to write is about to disappear and in some countries teachers are replaced with robots, the virtual world should not displace reality. So that man doesn't turn into an appendage of the computer, there should remain a place for conventional (non-computer) role-playing games, active outdoor games, manual labor and just the ability to write with a pencil and a pen in the child's education. And he must have a living mentor. The new world and new childhood requires from adults not only professionalism and technology, but above all flexible skills (so-called soft skills) - the ability to communicate, understand, support and inspire the pupil in a technological and robotic world.

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