



ФЕНОМЕНЪТ „РЕФЛЕКСИЯ“ В ПЕДАГОГИЧЕСКИТЕ ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИИ

Мариана Марусинец

THE PHENOMENON OF “REFLECTION” IN PEDAGOGICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Mariana Marusinets

Abstract: *The article presents the phenomenology of “reflection” in pedagogical science, starting from the second half of the XIXth century. Scientists understood the subject and object of this phenomenon in a different way, as: a mechanism to be aware of pedagogical activities; a means enhancing pedagogical influence on learning; a resource for pedagogical skill mastering, or for pedagogical theory development. The main directions of researches on reflection and its types are determined. The role of reflection in education, for formation and development of pedagogical professionals is revealed; it means teachers’ ability to imagine vision of a situation from students’ point of view and on this basis to clarify perceptions of themselves as educators, to adjust own behaviour and work “through the eyes of others”, to comprehend own actions through perception of others with own perceptive-reflexive abilities; to make self-analysis of own professional work; to use self-reflection and identify own attitudes towards themselves, own actions and behaviour in general.*

Key words: *reflection, pedagogical work, personality of a pedagogue, directions and approaches of researches on reflection in pedagogy.*

INTRODUCTION

Reflection always attracts attention of scientists. From philosophers of antiquity, speculated about own thinking (Aristotle, Plotinus, Plato, etc.) and to modern day scientists (O. Anisimov, B. Vulfov, I. Ziazun, D. Kolb, V. Lefevre, A. Markov, V. Orlov, S. Peniaeva, I. Semenov, S. Stepanov, G. Schedrovitsky, D. Shon and others), the phenomenon of “reflection” has obtained a lot of interpretations. Based on various research goals, scientists not always put forward a task to separate “reflection” into a special category, which has caused some difficulties in generalizing the original scientific data, especially professional ones. Reflection is studied in *psychology*, where mechanisms and regularities of reflexive processes are studied (O. Anisimov, I. Bekh, S. Maksymenko, V. Moliako, M. Naidionov, N. Paviakel, M. Savchin, I. Semenov, V. Semichenko, Y. Stepanov and others); in the *management* theory, where specific management of the systems having reflexive properties are discussed, reflexive patterns and mechanisms of managerial work and management in general are analysed (A. Karpov, N. Kolominsky, V. Lepsky, etc.); in *applied* mathematics, through explanation of normative procedures and strategies of interaction in so-called reflexive games (V. Lefevre et al.). Researches on reflection in *pedagogy* are particularly interesting.

RESEARCH RESULTS

As for pedagogical studies, the phenomenon of “reflection” is studied by scientists in several aspects: as a mechanism to be aware of pedagogical activities, as a means strengthening pedagogical influence on learning, as a resource for pedagogical skill mastering and pedagogical theory development.

K. Ushinsky (Ushy'nsky'j 1978) in his time pointed on importance to reflect by teachers their work in order to understand comprehensively the essence of human nature, to search for effective methods of education and training. This is clearly revealed in the author's fundamental work "A person as a subject of education – the most important features of the human body as for the art of education", summing the author's philosophical, psychological pedagogical views.

P. Blonskiy, S. Shatskiy stated in their writings that namely reflection, transferring a person from direct admiration of own life process to developed responsible attitude towards it, helps to understand own role in transformations of reality.

In A. Makarenko's pedagogical system, reflection was presented as a permanent method by which this teacher analyzed and refined his thoughts and positions regarding education in general and his pupils individually, putting forward assumptions concerning development of children's personality. Reflection occupied a central place in his concept, and perceptually-reflexive regulation of pedagogical work was seen as the basis of its success.

In the scientific works of V. Sukhomlinsky, where the pedagogical theory and practice are closely linked, and the material is personated directly from the first person, the author's reflectivity is clearly traced. By thinking, describing events, situations of communication with pupils, the author clearly revealed such characteristics of reflection, as self-examination, self-evaluation, reference to past experience and prediction of probable events from the point of views of the teacher and other participants in pedagogical interactions. Reflectivity of the pedagogical position of Vasylyi Oleksandrovykh was particularly expressive, in our opinion, in such his works: "I give my heart to children", "Talking with a young director", "One hundred tips to teachers", "How to educate a real person" (Suxomly'ns'ky'j 1977).

The particular interest in pedagogical reflection has arisen recently due to the introduction of a personally oriented educational paradigm providing humanization and appropriate training of specialists in creative self-realization, rejection of the stereotypes of pedagogical work, orientation towards innovative concepts and technologies in their professional work. Thus, the ideas of pedagogical reflection are actively used (V. Andrushchenko, B. Vulfov, G. Zvenigorodska, I. Ziaziun, V. Metaieva, A. Olesiuk, L. Podymova, V. Slastionin, A. Khutorskyi, etc.). According to A. Khutorskyi, reflection is the main methodological structure of the whole educational process and subject-matter actions (Xutorsky'j 2001).

Pedagogical studies present many interpretations that highlight different aspects of this phenomenon. The most significant are the following definition of reflection:

- within the "ability" concept, it means teachers' ability to imagine a situation from students' point of view and, on this basis, to clarify self-perception as teachers, to adjust own behaviour and work "through the eyes of others", to understand own actions through the perception of others with perceptive-reflexive abilities;
- as a type of pedagogical work, here, reflection has the main role in self-analysis of own professional work;
- identification with the concept of "self-reflection" with an emphasis on self-development through reflection as a process of personal meaning understanding, as a research act studying oneself as an actor of life, providing creative thinking or stimulating moral self-improvement;
- as a set of a person's attitudes to him/herself, his/her own actions and behaviour in general.

Analyzing the *pedagogical aspects of reflection*, we shall highlight several approaches to its interpretation.

The most common is the approach, according to which reflection is interpreted as a person's awareness on means and foundations of his/her activity, that is, as a one-time act, the result of which is the prompt consideration by the person of solutions of a problem situation. In this sense, according to I. Bekh, the most common understanding of "reflection" is associated with thinking, aimed at educational task fulfilling during formation of educational activities. Reflection acts as a means for a person's understanding of foundations for own actions, as thinking on oneself, on own processes and products of activity. To be more specific, a person must answer why he/she uses certain operations, what is a theoretical way of task implementation, and what sequence of acts should be used. Such a reflection is qualified as *normative and explanatory* (Bex 2011).

Within the framework of the *individual-personal approach*, the emphasis is shifted on the principle of self-development, according to which reflection should be developed to ensure a person's self-organization and self-mobilization in various conditions of his/her existence (Semy'chenko 2001).

According to another approach, reflection is the process of own experience rethinking and transformation, reflecting delimitation of problem-conflict situations, and generation of an effective attitude of Self toward

self-behaviour and interactions, to activities carried out, to social-cultural and objective environment. This approach emphasizes the need to develop own individuality through a constant reflection of the ways of effective self-determination and self-building on the base of formed own ideals and values. So, we can say about *self-reflection* as awareness and evaluation of all aspects of one's life from the standpoint of its successfulness and opportunities for further development.

The modern pedagogical literature use the concept of "*systemic reflection*" (self-study, self-evaluation, self-control); systemic reflection in a problem-conflict situation when former stereotypes of life do not allow a person to achieve positive results in conditions that have changed qualitatively.

Systemic reflection provides transition to new, previously unknown ways and means to achieve positive results. The role of reflection at work with problem tasks is to pay attention to facts that students have seen, perceived, understood in a process and as a result of task comprehension. At the moment, students have to take a particular reflexive position, when their own intellectual activities become the subject of self-examination. This forms a two-layer organization of activity; and reflection implements the *system-generating* function, since it promotes understanding of activity organization and structures it.

The motives of personal development become actual, if there are wider possibilities to discover something new on the base of past experience. Such actualisation, in researchers' opinion, is also possible because rethinking by a person of his/her experience leads to the question of self-directed development, when reflection takes place not only at the level of thinking, but also at the level of feelings and emotions. At the same time, systemic reflection of a group ensures organization of something new thanks to co-creation of its members, which contributes to emergence and manifestation of the motive for cooperation in professional work.

The most recent scientific writings (A. Markova, V. Orlov, O. Savchenko, T. Chamov, etc.) emphasize importance of reflection for professional development of future specialists as a core component determining relations between meanings of life and professional work.

Scientists emphasize reasonability to introduce a reflexive approach to manage formation and development of the educational quality system in universities; here, there are both external administrative influences, as well as self-management, normative and axiological management and evaluation of quality components of the educational process. Reflection within this approach is not just knowledge or understanding of a person about him/herself, but also clarification how others know and appreciate a reflecting individual, his/her personal qualities, emotional reactions and cognitive abilities.

V. Semichenko observes that vocational training of future specialists should be carried out taking into account several contexts, in particular personal reflection, which provides complete and adequate self-knowledge, self-evaluation, self-regulation, as well as general psychological culture acquired through formation of systemic reflection, comprehension of oneself as a structural component of a certain system and poly-system being in general (Semy'chenko 2001).

In the modern pedagogy, reflexion is associated conceptually, procedurally, and functionally with self-observation, introspection, retrospection, self-awareness, etc., and considered as an important mechanism for development of a personality.

Reflection, as researchers believe, positively influences development of future specialists' personality because it:

- leads to a holistic understanding, knowledge about the content, methods and means of their professional work;
- allow a person to evaluate critically his/herself and his/her activities;
- help students to become actors of their activities.

Reflection is expressed in the so-called normal duality of consciousness, when a person in relation to him/herself acts simultaneously as an object of reflection ("I-performer") and as an actor ("I-controller"), regulating own actions and deeds. Thus, reflection begins to be interpreted as a mechanism for assessing by a person of his/her life world, its value-semantic composition and changes occurring in it.

Participation of reflection in restructuring of the value-semantic constituent of a person's world image is particularly emphasised; here, reflection is not only a situational moment of activity, thinking or communication, but also a condition of self-organization, developed through comprehension of meanings and values of multidimensional world objects, discovering him/herself in them, own true needs and opportunities, true motives of behaviour.

As a result of reflection, a person represents on an ideal plane of consciousness the connections of the objective world and own presence in it. Reflection as an organizing determinant of creative thinking influence

emergence of new personal formations, in particular, during “introduction” of new meanings and values into own image of the world. Highly developed reflection is manifested in restructuring of a person’s behaviour and activities, formation and reorganization of meanings, searching for new methods for specific problem solving, and actuation of creative processes and self-realization.

By providing a way over limits of a situation and its understanding in the context of relations between “close” and “distant”, reflection puts a person in front of the problem of moral responsibility for everything done or omitted. At the same time, the combination of opposing, at first glance, tendencies to “be oneself” and “to go beyond oneself” is in fact the essence of one phenomenon.

G. Fakhretdinova (Fakhretdyanova 2008), based on previous studies on a role of reflection in understanding of personality integrity, as well as studied existential levels of reflection on Self and subjective Self, distinguishes the following levels of personal existence integrity achieved by professionals:

- the first level – situational Self, that means full immersion of Self into a specific situation; absence of reflection;
- the second level – partial: value-oriented Self, when raising over a specific situational is possible, situations meaningful for value orientations can be selected. It is the level of comparative reflection;
- the third level – axiological Self as an aspect of a value characterizing the most meaningful for a person generalized content of his/her life. It is the level of synthesizing reflection;
- the fourth – a holistic reflexive Self, determining ways out of the boundaries of axiological Self. It is the level of transcendental reflection, allowing a person not only to reach beyond one’s own, but also to establish relations with the world, values, and so on.

As a result, reflection, ensuring a person’s openness to him/herself, to a new experience or to other people, participates in creation of necessary prerequisites for transformation of a personal physical space into a space of possibilities. Actuation of reflexive opportunities in a specific educational situation means going beyond this situation, self-analysis and making own decisions, which means stable self-identification, resistance to external influences of a manipulative nature.

Personal development of a teacher is impossible without developed reflection, because a person, knowing him/herself, deliberately creates his/her life path, he/she is self-fulfilled in work, in his/her being, reflecting fully this person’s essence. A developing person is constantly in a state of self-knowledge. He/she is capable of reflection, which helps him/her to go beyond current life situations, to shift the focus from situational to substantial, indirect, to move from development of individual psychic characteristics to generalization and development of integral Self.

Emphasizing importance of reflection for personal and, above all, spiritual development, I. Bekh notes that deployment of a person’s reflection (thinking aimed at motivation of acting) and will reveals the progressive changes in the moral and spiritual acts of the person, so he/she can act freely and morally responsible.

The scientist pays special attention to personal reflection, which he associates with meaning-value self-consciousness, with a person’s spiritual Self. He distinguishes four of types of reflection: 1) regulatory reflection aimed at conscious regulation of the course of mental processes; 2) defining reflection, manifested as a person’s understanding of own Self in order to realize changes in his own inner personal structure and to recognize all that hinders personal perfection; 3) synthesizing reflection, consisting in gathering of formed spiritual values into integral spiritual Self; 4) creative reflection, which function is the spiritual and moral development and self-development (Bex 2011).

Thus, reflection is a prerequisite for a person’s self-regulation. It involves development, on the one hand, of a person’s ability to have a critical attitude to him/herself, and on the other, to know own disadvantages and look at them without feeling of guilty or shame, perceiving him/herself as a person who can be improved with own efforts. Namely, during reflection, a person forms and develops his/her goals of activity, communication, behaviour; he/she perceives own actions as free moral acts, for which he/she is responsible to him/herself and to society.

Reflection contributes to development of teachers’ ability to perceive correctly requirements of other people, groups, to analyze a situation of people activities in connection with implementation of these requirements, to fulfil successfully these requirements, to plan different activities in accordance with external conditions and internal capabilities, to set requirements for themselves, to block negative motives and focus on self-improvement.

Thus, reflection ensures a person’s adaptability to new conditions of work. At the same time, it becomes clear that reflection appears and is implemented in any case, when there is a certain difficulty, in order to

reconstruct this difficulty and to identify its causes. In other words, it has already been recognized that reflection improves various activities that can be put under the control of consciousness. A person can not only act, but also can realize how he/she acts, can govern him/herself.

Assimilation of rules of an activity, transformation of its creative components into certain rules is associated with the mechanism of reflection, which expands a person's capabilities, develops them. At studying of relations of an activity with its past states and means, it is necessary to reconstruct the acquired experience, describe the schemes and means of the activity. It is appropriate to recall G. Shchedrovitsky's concept on "cooperation of activities", within which reflection is understood as a way out of activity boundaries if it is impossible to implement it. Passing into the position of a new activity, a person obtain an opportunity to create new meanings, on the basis of which he/she understands and describes the former activity. This new activity absorbs "reflexively" the first one (which makes it possible to reach the level of innovations and creativity). Such "absorption" mechanism gives a person an opportunity to build cooperation of activities (Shchedrovitsky 2005).

The works of A. Khutorsky are important for understanding of the essence of reflection and the mechanisms of its formation at education. The scientist singles out the following stages of reflection during learning:

- 1) stopping of a subject-matter (pre-reflexive) activity, which must be completed or suspended;
- 2) reproduction of the sequence of actions performed;
- 3) study of a complex sequence of actions in terms of its efficiency, performance, and compliance with the tasks;
- 4) definition and formation of reflection results (subject-matter products of the activity – ideas, proposals, patterns, answers to questions, methods investigated during the activity, hypotheses regarding future activities);
- 5) verification of the ideas and hypotheses put forward in practice during the next subject-matter activity (Xutorsky 2001).

In general, according to A. Khutorsky, learning is an alternation of subject-matter and reflexive activities. Their effectiveness depends on teachers' ability to create such conditions when students have the desire to talk about a training session and their activities during it, express their feelings through non-verbal means of sensory reflection. Interacting with students, teachers can use any type of educational reflection if necessary: physical ("to make something in time – not to not have enough time"); sensory ("feeling of comfort – discomfort"); intellectual ("I understand – I do not understand, I have a difficulty"); spiritual ("became better – worse, creating or destroying himself or others") (Xutorsky 2001).

V. Slastonin believes that formation of future specialists' subjective qualities is directly related to peculiarities of their reflexive comprehension of their life and life situations, reflexive activity during learning and interpersonal interactions. The scientist has introduced the concept of "reflexive culture", which performs special regulatory-integrative and sensory-forming functions: generation and gathering of values, life meaningful orientations into a dynamic semantic system characteristic for a mature personality, axiological rethinking of life path in the context of self-determination and self-orientation, formation of responsibility as a regulator of behaviour and activities, etc. Therefore, the scientist believes that formation of reflexive culture among students is a prerequisite for a high quality professional training in universities (Slastenyn 2005).

The researcher has determined that future specialists with high reflexive culture, which is manifested in deep meaningful experiences, breadth of psychological time, ability to construct easily rich images of the past and future, and aspiration for personal uniqueness, have high subjectivity. Such students are characterized by a creative, active-selective attitude towards their human and professional life, they are focused on realization of Self, in particular, self-identification, restructuring of personal qualities.

So, reflection, as it is understood in pedagogical researches, means a form of theoretical activity, thinking, revealing goals, content, means of a person's own activities, reflecting a person's internal states, serving as a means for self-knowledge and self-development. At the same time, a teacher's development as a personality cannot be reduced to reflection. As S. Rubinstein pointed out, it is important to keep simultaneously two lines of development – development of reflection and development on the plane of active interactions between a person and the world.

Developing S. Rubinstein's views, S. Maksymenko points out that a person who is concentrated on him/herself and detached from the world, is disharmonious one, and his/her development is deformed. However, a person incapable to make deep reflection and self-regulation is also disharmoniously superficial, irresponsible and unpromising. Such a position reveals lack of self-regulation and the crisis of personal responsibility and can be reduced only to external manifestations, when a person's identity is masked by dogmatic playing of social roles (Maksymenko 2000).

Thus, accentuation on reflection as an independent branch of scientific knowledge has created many approaches to its studying, such approaches have great scientific significance for pedagogical research on this problem. Despite differences in philosophical, psychological and pedagogical interpretations of the phenomenon of reflection, the invariant essence of it is its understanding in the most general form as “a person’s self-consciousness or consciousness that is conscious on itself”, a person’s ability to self-analysis, comprehension and rethinking of own subject-social relations with the environment.

The diversity of general pedagogical and professional-pedagogical interpretations of reflection corresponds to the present, non-classical state of science, when a researcher’s subjective viewpoint is taken into consideration at the first place. So, this phenomenon does not require generalized absolute definitions, it can be defined depending on the context of a researcher’s understanding. Such general concepts as reflection are not the result of observations and multi-layered empiricism (as in classical science), but rather the result of individual reflection and understanding of personality.

REFERENCE

Bex, I. D. (2011). Psyxologichni mexanizmyi sxodzhennya do osobyistosti do duxovnyix cinnostej [Psychological mechanisms of ascent to personality to spiritual values]. *Pedagogika i psyxologiya – Pedagogy and psychology*, 2, 37–44. [in Ukraine]

Faxretdyinova, G. R. (2008). Refleksyiyi kak sredstvo stanovleniya lyichnosti professionala [Reflection as a means of becoming a professional personality] *Psyxologiya obucheniya – Psychology of teaching*, 11, 4–18.

Maksy'menko, S. D. (2000). *Genetyicheskaya psyxologiya (metodologicheskaya refleksyiyi problem razvyitiya v psyxologiyi)* [Genetic psychology (methodological reflection of problems of development in psychology)]. Moscow: Refl-buk. [in Russian]

Semenov, Y. N. (1989). Psyxologiya refleksyiyi v nauchnom tvorchestve S. L. Rubyinshtejna [Psychology of Reflection in the Scientific Work of SL Rubinshtein]. *Psyxologicheskij zhurnal Psychological journal*, 10 (4), 67–74. [in Russian]

Semyichenko, V. A. (2001). *Psyxologiya osobyistosti [Psychology of the individual]*. Kyiv: Eshke O. M. [in Ukraine]

Shhedroviczkyj, G. P. (2005). *Myshlenie. Ponyimanie. Refleksyiyi. [Thinking. Understanding. Reflection.]*. Moscow The Legacy MMK. [in Russian]

Slastenyin, V. A., Elyiseev, V. K. (2005). Refleksyivnaya kulitura uchytelya kak sub'ekta pedagogyicheskoy deyatel'nosti [Reflective culture of the teacher as a subject of pedagogical activity]. *Pedagogyicheskoe obrazovaniye yi nauka – Pedagogical education and science*, 5, 37–42. [in Russian]

Suxomlynskyij, V. O. (1977). *Vyibrani tvoryi [Selected Works]*. (Vol. 3) Kyiv: Soviet school. [in Ukraine]

Ushyinskyj, K. D. (1978). *Yizbrannyye pedagogyicheskyye sochyineniya [Selected pedagogical compositions]*. (Vol. 1) Moscow: Pedagogy. [in Russian].

Xutorsky'j A. V. (2001). *Soderzhaniye obrazovaniya. Sovremennaya dyidaktyika [The content of education. Modern Didactics]*. Saint Petersburg: SPb. [in Russian]