

Pedagogical empathy as a professional resource to create an inclusive environment

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Abstract. The article is devoted to one of the most important components of interpersonal communication between teachers and students - empathy. The article discusses the features of the pedagogical empathy of teachers of correctional schools teaching children with mental retardation and teachers of secondary schools. The research is based on the definition of empathy given by I.M. Yusupov, who, considering empathy in the framework of the ways of understanding (rational, emotional and behavioral) and emphasizes that empathy occupies a key place in a person's understanding of objects of social nature; in the acquisition of communicative competence by a person in the effective interaction of a teacher and a student [1]. The purpose of the study: to identify the level of empathy, the structure of empathy among teachers of correctional schools. The study involved 107 teachers. 57 of them are teachers of correctional schools, 50 are teachers of secondary schools. The age range of the study participants ranged from 36 to 45 years. Teaching experience - from 8-11 years. Research methods: diagnostics of the level of empathic abilities according to V.V. Boyko, "Balanced Emotional Empathy Scale - BEES" by A. Mehrabyan as modified by N. Epstein, "Determination of personality orientation" by B. Bass. To identify the statistical significance of the differences, the Student's t-test was used. The interdependencies between psychodiagnostic indicators were studied by the method of correlation analysis using Spearman's rank correlation coefficient. The results of the study showed that teachers of correctional institutions are distinguished by significantly higher indicators, compared with teachers of general education schools, of rational, emotional and intuitive channels of empathy, less representation of emotional barriers in communication, greater focus on emotional communication and a variety of forms of empathic response.

1 A problem statement

Democratic transformations in Russia have contributed to the development of an idea of humanistic orientation towards children with special healthcare needs and raised awareness of the need for integration of such children into the society. This is especially true for

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children with intellectual disabilities. Integrating students with intellectual disabilities requires overcoming barriers that prevent them from functioning properly in society. Under this approach, any forms, methods, and technologies of education become not an end in themselves, but should be considered in the context of one of the main tasks of education, that is ensuring the most favorable conditions for adaptation and inclusive interaction with society. As a result, education is focused on helping a child with a developmental disability to find their place and determine their social role in relationships with the outside world. At the moment, the inclusion of such children in the socio-cultural and general education environment is an urgent issue not only in pedagogy, but also in psychology and sociology [2].

An important characteristic of the pedagogical process is that the professional activity of the teacher is replete with emotions and carried out within the processes of communication, interaction and interpersonal perception [3]. In this regard, the formation of the emotional aspect of relationships with students becomes particularly relevant. The emotional factor significantly increases the effectiveness of the pedagogical process, that is why it is extremely important for the teacher to obtain personal qualities necessary for optimal interaction. One of these professionally significant qualities is empathy, i.e. compassion, the ability to put oneself in the student's place, to be emotionally responsive to students' experiences, and acceptance of the feelings that they experience [4]. Therefore, despite the fact that the problem of increasing empathy in the teacher's personal development has long been the subject of scientific research in pedagogy and psychology, the study of this phenomenon remains relevant. This is due to the fact that empathy as a psychological phenomenon has a significant impact on the whole personality, increasing the motivation and productivity of the teacher's activity and expanding the idea of its effectiveness [5].

1.1 The objective of the work

The question of empathy as a person's ability to be compassionate, empathize, and put oneself in someone else's place has been extensively studied by foreign and Russian psychologists, such as S. Freud, T. Lipps, V.V. Boyko, C. Rogers, I.M. Yusupov, V.V. Labunskaya, T.P. Gavrilova, Yu.A. Mengeritsky and others [6, 7, 8, 9]. Multiple meanings of the term are due to the fact that the concept of "empathy" in studies by psychologists corresponds to the variety of concepts such as empathic interaction, empathic reactions, empathic capacity and empathic relations [4, 8]. Despite varieties in the interpretation of the phenomenon of empathy, many researchers note that empathy affects the process of interpersonal communication, helps people to establish contact, draw conclusions and predict the behavior of another person and build their behavior on these grounds [10, 4, 9]. Pedagogical empathy is an emotional feature of a teacher that plays an important role in relations between participants in the educational process in their perception of each other, and in establishing mutual understanding between them [11]. For example, research by Ye.P. Ilyin [12] confirms that empathy among teachers, as a basic professional skill, should be manifested in the form of compassion.

Empathy as a system-forming factor underlies the pedagogical orientation of the individual and bears a leading function in making interpersonal interaction successful, whereby in the teaching profession it can be considered as a basis, a mandatory ability of a specialist [13]. A number of authors considered pedagogical empathy as a quality of a teacher's personality that manifests itself in situations of pedagogical communication and interaction with students [14, 15, 16]. It is expressed in understanding of the inner world of students, in emotional involvement in the life of a student. Empathic experiences are realized in the forms of helping behavior [14]. In this case, empathy has a specific social and practical significance for optimizing and regulating interpersonal relationships with

students and, thus, for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the pedagogical process [17]. N.S. Shkitina considers empathy as a moral quality of a person and highlights the so-called personal component of empathy, represented as a form of identification of one object with another (a person's readiness to sense other people's emotions and experiences), analogy (similarity between phenomena or objects), congruence (perception of a phenomenon or process as passing from one individual to another) and reflection [5].

Ye.R. Ovcharenko notes the importance of empathy for teachers. Work with teachers is designed to actualize empathic abilities: the ability to analyze, feel what is happening to the student, explain and predict the child's behavior in a specific life situation [17]. The main requirement for a teacher is, regardless of the situation, the ability to put oneself in the child's place, and then analyze his/her own reactions – feelings, thoughts, behavior [7]. The peculiarity of a child's behavior, especially with intellectual disabilities, is primarily determined by the emotional and sensory sphere [18]. Therefore, the ability to empathize with children with intellectual disabilities in life situations of any kind, stimulate their goals, desires, endorse their creativity, and understand their feelings can ensure success in interpersonal interaction between the teacher and the child [18]. This approach makes it possible to create prerequisites for teacher's self-development, encourages teachers to search for individual ways of interaction in a multi-subject educational environment, and reveals resources for overcoming difficulties that arise in pedagogical practice [5]. At the same time, it is noted in the pedagogical studies that even many teachers with long-time teaching experience have not developed empathy or developed it on a low level [19]. This is what makes it necessary to study it in more depth. Our study is based on the definition of empathy given by I.M. Yusupov, who considered empathy in the framework of ways of understanding (rational, emotional, and behavioral) and emphasized that empathy is key in human understanding of social nature; in individual acquiring of communicative competence during the effective interaction between the teacher and the student [1].

2 Materials and the results of the research

107 teachers participated in the study. Of these, 57 were teachers of correctional mental health treatment schools, and 50 are teachers of general secondary schools. The age range of the study participants ranged from 36-45 years. Their teaching experience ranged from 8-11 years.

The results of the study were obtained on the basis of testing, using questionnaires. Communication barriers were defined by the questionnaire of V.V. Boyko [20]. Diagnostics of the level of empathic abilities was carried out according to the methods of V.V. Boyko [21] and the "Balanced Emotional Empathy Scale" (BEES) of A. Mehrabian, modified by N. Epstein [21]. The method of "Personality Orientation Inventory" by B. Bass [21] was also used in the study. Observation and individual interviews were used for supplementary information and clarification. The study was conducted in a group face-to-face format. Each participant has previously given their voluntary consent for testing. To compare the data obtained in the samples by the degree of expression, taking into account the level of statistical significance of differences, Student's t-test was used.

Correlations between psychodiagnostic indicators were studied by means of correlation analysis. The Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient was used. Correlation analysis was performed separately for the indicators considered in the experimental and control samples.

The aim of the study was to identify the level of empathy and the structure of empathy among teachers of correctional institutions.

Research problems:

- to determine the general and specific features of empathy among teachers of correctional institutions and teachers of general education institutions;
- to determine the expressiveness and manifestation of communicative barriers in communication among teachers of correctional institutions and teachers of general education institutions;
- to identify the relationship between the components of empathy and communication barriers among teachers of correctional institutions and teachers of general education institutions.

The orientation and structure of teachers' empathic abilities were studied using the technique of V.V. Boyko [20]. The author considers empathy as an emotional-rational-intuitive form of reflection of another person. According to the author, the rational point in empathy lies in the analytical processing of information about another person coming simultaneously through different sensory channels; emotional aspect is associated with understanding of another person based on one's own emotional experience, through emotional associations and transfers; intuitive aspect is reduced to the subconscious processing of information about a partner, an unconscious comparison of it with the past experience [6].

Analysis of the results of study on the orientation of empathy across teachers of correctional institutions and teachers of general education institutions has shown that there are both common and specific manifestations of empathy. Common manifestations include the predominance of the emotional channel of empathy and the ability to identify oneself with someone else's experiences. The emotional channel of empathy captures the ability of the empathizer to enter into an emotional resonance with others – to empathize, to be compassionate. Most teachers in both groups are not only interested in their students, but also emotionally responsive to them. The latter includes emotional sensitivity, that is, emotional responsiveness to the students' experiences. The data from the clarifying conversation allowed us to assume that teachers of both groups experience and show genuine emotions, without trying to show those that are dictated by the teachers' idea of proper experiences in a particular situation. Thus most teachers in both groups are characterized not only by emotional responsiveness, but also by emotional authenticity. For 26% of secondary school teachers and 23% of correctional teachers, it is not typical to respond emotionally to students' problems. They did not seek to understand the child, to show interest in the problems that concern him, the material was presented in a dry manner without seeking any reasons for poor assimilation of the material presented. Identification is another prerequisite for genuine empathy. This is the ability to understand another person based on empathy, putting oneself in the place of a partner. The basis of identification is the ease, mobility and flexibility of emotions, the ability to imitate. These studies suggest that teachers of both groups have the ability to understand the other person based on empathy, putting themselves in the place of a partner [10].

The results of the study revealed some differences in the orientation of the empathy channels across teachers of correctional and general education institutions. Teachers of correctional institutions had a higher rational channel of empathy than teachers of secondary schools (at $p \leq 0.05$). The rational channel of empathy characterizes the focus of attention, perception, and thinking of the empathizer on the essence of any other person – on their states, problems, and behavior [10]. Teachers of correctional schools are more likely to show spontaneous interest in their students, to recognize their emotions more accurately. The pedagogical meaning of perceived emotional states of students is determined by their role in the cohesive pedagogical process. Many teachers of correctional schools strive to form constructive forms of interaction with students.

Emotional and intuitive channels of empathy as well as the penetrating ability to empathize are also more inherent in teachers working in the special education system (at $p \leq$

0.01). Perhaps this is due to the fact that teaching in correctional institutions is impossible without openness, trust, and focus on the personality of the student. Emotional responsiveness of the teacher is the most important factor of influence and interaction in educational work; it determines the success of emotional impact, mobilizes students, encourages them to act, and activates their intellectual activity. At general education schools, many children are motivated by their parents or have a motivation towards learning themselves, and the teacher can influence and convince them with the help of cognitive technologies [5]. In a correctional school, one of the main ways to influence is the teacher's emotionality, their ability to engage students. Teachers of correctional schools try to create an atmosphere of trust in the process of interacting with students and are able to anticipate the reactions of students. Empathy, compassion and emotional harmony allow teachers to understand the emotional state of the student, their true intentions and experiences.

Due to the fact that the results of the study showed a more pronounced orientation of the emotional channel of empathy, it makes sense to consider in more detail the emotional component of empathy in teachers of both groups. These results were obtained using the questionnaire test of diagnostics of the emotional component of empathy (A. Mehrabian, N. Epstein). From the point of view of A. Mehrabian, emotional empathy is the ability to empathize with another person, feel what another person feels, experience the same emotional states and identify with them [13].

The "Emotional Empathy Scale" method allows analyzing general empathic tendencies of teachers, its parameters such as the level of expression of the ability to respond emotionally to the experiences of another person and the degree of correspondence/discrepancy between the sign of the experiences of the object and the subject of empathy. The objects of empathy are social situations and people that the subject could empathize with in everyday life [21].

Analysis of the results of the study showed that teachers of both groups have an expressed ability to emotional empathy. At the same time, among teachers of secondary schools, there were mostly those whose data were in the range of a high level of empathy. These teachers primarily focus on emotional impressions. They are characterized by painful vulnerability, which makes it difficult to effectively socialize and can even lead to various psychosomatic diseases. 21% of teachers in general education schools and 15% of teachers in correctional schools have reduced ability to emotional empathy. These teachers have difficulties in establishing contacts with people in interpersonal relationships, they feel uncomfortable in a big company, do not understand emotional manifestations and actions, and often do not achieve mutual understanding with others. Empathic understanding of the student's personality is replaced by stereotypical conclusions about the behavior of the average person. The teacher may also use questionable standards and measures to assess the student's personality. For example, this may include outdated views, everyday pseudo-wisdom, or biased judgments.

Teachers of correctional schools have a slightly higher average level than teachers of general education schools. These teachers are more likely to judge others by their actions than to trust their own personal impressions in interpersonal relations. As a rule, they have good control over their own emotional manifestations, but they are also able to predict the development of relationships between people.

Emotional dimension of communication and those emotional attitudes that make interaction socially acceptable can be considered as another factor which characterizes successful inclusive interaction. In particular, to understand the ability of teachers involved in the study to establish emotional contacts it is important to identify the reasons that hinder successful communication. In general, teachers of general education institutions have significantly more emotional barriers in communication (at $p \leq 0.01$). The most pronounced

emotional problems, in comparison with teachers of correctional schools, are manifested in the dominance of negative emotions, inadequate expression of emotions and inability to manage their emotions. Teachers in this group have predominantly negative emotional background. They quickly had emotions of anger and resentment in communication. Also, we observed the instability of emotional manifestations; positive emotions were rarer, and negative ones were more frequent. Rudeness, irritability and resentment are manifestations of the “emotional deficiency” symptom. Inadequate “economy” of emotions limits the emotional impact due to selective response in the process of communicating with students. At the same time, the teacher believes that he/she is acting in an acceptable way, but the student feels quite different things, such as emotional callousness, indifference, disrespect. Perhaps the most important thing for teachers of general education schools is to focus on the learning process, while teachers of correctional schools are more focused on socialization and adaptation of their students to society.

The results obtained using the method “Personality Orientation Inventory” by B. Bass also allowed us to note the differences between the orientation of teachers of correctional secondary schools. Thus, teachers working in the special education system are more focused on communication, i.e. they strive to maintain relationships with people under any conditions, focus on joint activities, and feel the need for emotional relationships with people. Teachers of secondary schools revealed a predominance of focus on their activities. They are primarily interested in solving professional problems and performing their professional duties as best they can. In interpersonal relationships, they are primarily focused on professional cooperation. It should be noted that self-orientation is not typical for teachers of both groups.

Based on the correlation analysis, we identified the most significant relationships (for example, strong relationships at the level of statistical significance $p \leq 0.01$ between indicators of empathy and emotional barriers in communication). It was revealed that the ability of teachers of both groups to interact constructively with students depends on the expression of empathy. The ability to empathize in secondary school teachers depends on the ability to identify with another person’s experiences (.407). Identification is based on ease, flexibility, and mobility of emotions. Teachers of this group are able to perceive the subjective world of another person through identification with them.

Among system-forming components in the structure of empathy of correctional school teachers are attitudes that promote empathy, the ability to empathize, and the cognitive channel. These components of empathy significantly reduce emotional barriers in communication and contribute to the expansion of various forms of empathic response (.349).

Thus, teachers of correctional schools are characterized by a focus on understanding of the essence of another person, a sincere, spontaneous interest in another, which is especially important for accepting students at the first stages of forming a student group. Empathy, and first of all, its penetrating power determines the assumption about the possible existence of the comfort of students.

3 Conclusions

1. Manifestations of empathy among teachers of correctional institutions and secondary schools have common features, such as the predominance of the emotional channel of empathy and the ability to identify. Significant differences in the components of empathy among teachers of correctional schools in comparison with teachers of secondary schools include the following: high indicators of rational, emotional and intuitive channels of empathy.

2. Teachers of secondary schools have significantly more emotional barriers in communication than teachers of correctional schools.

3. Teachers working in the system of special education are more focused on communication, while teachers in general secondary education have a more pronounced focus of the individual on business and business communication.

4. Correlation analysis has demonstrated the direct dependence of the ability to empathy on the ability to identify among teachers of secondary schools. lightness, flexibility and mobility of emotions. The penetrating ability for empathy and its cognitive component among teachers of correctional schools significantly reduce emotional barriers in communication and contribute to the expansion of various forms of empathic response.

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