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NATURE-CONFORMING EDUCATION AS A SCIENTIFIC PHENOMENON

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Summary: *The article actualizes the idea of naturalness in the context of modern pedagogical theory and educational practice. The article characterizes the peculiarities of ideas about the conformity of nature from the standpoint of three dimensions: pedagogical, historical, pedagogical and general scientific. The essence of nature-based education is revealed and its distinctive features are revealed in the system of pedagogical concepts and ideologically close pedagogical directions, such as folk, free, natural, personality-oriented, health-saving, ecological, noospheric education. The content and semantic multidimensionality of the pedagogical phenomenon and the relevance of its ideas in the context of new challenges of modernity are determined. The article substantiates the role of nature-based education in activating the human factor, stimulating environmental, resource-saving thinking and behavior of the younger generation and contributing to the formation of an integral and harmonious personality capable of creative creation and self-realization in conditions of uncertainty and complexity of the external environment.*

Key words: *conformity to nature, natural education, the principle of education, external nature, human nature.*

INTRODUCTION

The life activity of modern man takes place in conditions of global and unpredictable changes, which is caused, according to scientists, by the civilization entry “into a stage of instability, crisis conditions and instability, ... threatening the destruction of civilization and even the self-destruction of humanity” (Стёпин, Цивилизация, 2017: 6–7). “The concept of sustainable development presupposes setting of a balance between resource consumption and restorative ability of natural complexes” (Cvetković, Milenović, 2015: 190). The growth of environmental problems, economic and political tension, the crisis of social and spiritual spheres manifested themselves with even greater force in the 21st century. Current events and phenomena convincingly prove the need to search for new strategies for civilizational development that can ensure overcoming the negative challenges of the time. “The concept of sustainable development is based on balanced economic, social and cultural development, where the present generation satisfies its own needs and requirements without prejudice to the future generation by co-evolution and co-existence of the society and nature” (Cvetković, Milenović, 2015: 194).

Education, as a sphere that is most sensitive to changes and conditions of uncertainty, is faced with the need for constant modernization, reform, introduction of innovative technologies, etc. The processes noted above, in combination with unfavorable stressful conditions, inevitably lead to serious consequences for the psychophysical and social health of subjects of educational activity. As a result, cases of professional stress and burnout are becoming more frequent among teachers, and didactogeny, neurotic disorders, depression, etc. among students. A more general consequence of such phenomena, however, as well as their root cause, is a violation of the equilibrium and balance between a person and the environment, harmony with oneself as a biological, social and spiritual being.

The identified problem is complex in nature and one of the solutions is seen in the direction of pedagogical theory and educational practice towards conformity with nature. This idea is not new, but every time at turning points in the development of society we return to it and rethink it in the context of a changed socio-cultural context, finding in the phenomenon of natural conformity both simple and eternal truths

and new meanings, which represent support points for modern pedagogical science.

Most modern scientists study “conformity with nature” in a stable and traditional combination with the concept of “principle” (N. D. Vinogradova, V. E. Domansky, P. P. Kozlova, A. V. Kulik, V. V. Kumarin, A. M. Kushnir, I. Ya. Lerner, R. L. Lygdynova, E. N. Medynsky, E. A. Petrova, A. I. Piskunov, V. P. Sazonov, S. M. Salimova, G. A. Kharkovskaya, A. N. Shimina, etc.) and are considered as a methodological basis (meta-principle) of education, as well as a requirement for the practical organization of this process. The emphasis is on the need to take into account the individual, age, and gender characteristics of the child. In the context of the trend of individualization, such a formulation of the pedagogical principle is quite stable and in demand, but at the same time it narrows the boundaries and possibilities of the phenomenon it denotes. In addition, the perception of the principle as a tool for organizing the pedagogical process displaces the understanding of its methodological potential. In turn, a deep understanding of the analyzed phenomenon is possible only in the methodological dimension. In this case, conformity to nature acts as an idea, theory, ideology, etc., which is projected onto pedagogical processes and phenomena, determining their content, purpose and procedural content.

Conformity to nature as a methodological guideline and the value-semantic basis of education makes the use of the term “nature-conforming education” completely justified, appropriate and correct. Our extensive theoretical knowledge of this phenomenon enables us to identify nature-conforming education as an independent branch of pedagogical theory and practice. It is based on the ideas of the unconditional priority of the general laws of the development of nature and deep scientific knowledge about human nature. It is in nature-conforming education that the urgent tasks of activating the human factor, cultivating environmental, resource-saving thinking and behavior of the younger generation, the demands of society and time for the formation of a holistic and harmonious personality, capable of creative creation and self-realization in conditions of uncertainty and complexity of the external environment, are expressed.

The phenomenon under consideration, with its multidimensionality and multidimensionality, aims to study it within the framework of three dimensions: the actual pedagogical, historical and pedagogical

and general scientific. Each of them sets different angles of vision and discourses for the conceptualization of pedagogical knowledge, determines methods of reconstruction and interpretation, which provides the possibility of a systematic and holistic understanding of nature-based education.

THE ACTIVE PEDAGOGICAL DIMENSION OF NATURE CONFORMITY

The pedagogical dimension itself interprets nature-conforming education as a pedagogical phenomenon, determines its content and semantic features in the system of pedagogical concepts and directions that are “ideologically” close to it. Despite the fact that the ideas of nature-conforming education form the basis of various existing pedagogical directions, there is no holistic and systematic idea of it. Attempts to define nature-conforming education were carried out mainly in the context of ethno pedagogy. Thus, N. I. Ivanova interprets it as “education, which in all its main characteristic properties corresponds to the nature of the subjects of education, as well as the nature of the ethnic group and the laws of Nature as a whole” and brings it closer to folk education (Иванова, 2004: 10). In the context of the paradigmatic approach, Professor V. A. Lukov substantiated the paradigm of nature-conforming education, which, according to the author, replaces the authoritarian paradigm, challenging it, and precedes the paradigm of education in a group of peers. The author connects it with the names of Ya. A. Comenius, J.-J. Rousseau, I. G. Pestalozzi and A. F. Disterweg, calls the ideas of “freeing the child from strict control, creating situations where he himself learns to do the right thing” an advantage, and the individualism of the paradigm a limitation (Лыков, 2003: 143).

A deep understanding of the essence and characteristics of nature-conforming education aims at including this term in the system of similar phenomena, which include, first of all, culturally congruent and human-conforming education. What they have in common is the idea of conformity as the correspondence of the process of personality formation to the dominant value at a specific stage of the historical development of society. Also, their similarity is due to their connection with the concept of “nature”, which, due to its ambiguity, is identified either with the environment (natural (natural), social (artificial), or

with the internal essence of objects and phenomena, in this case, human nature.

Culturally appropriate education determines the importance of building pedagogical interaction with a child based on his existing sociocultural experience and taking into account the conditions of the process of personality formation, determined by regional, national, environmental and cultural characteristics. At the same time, a mutual transition is observed in the semantic meanings of nature-conforming and culture-conforming education. Culture is usually called the “second nature” of a person, therefore, in this sense, conformity with nature “absorbs” cultural conformity.

Human-conforming education is aimed at the pupil as the central subject of educational activity, whose unique internal nature determines his development and formation. At the same time, these processes are determined both by the holistic (socio-bio-spiritual) nature of man and by its specific beginning (social, biological, spiritual). Education from the standpoint of the principle of human conformity, according to A. V. Khutorsky, is “an activity aimed at developing the personal qualities of a person necessary for his self-realization” (Хуторской, 2018: 144). In this case, the difference between nature-conforming education and human-conforming education lies in fixing attention not only on the child, but and on his relationship with the environment, while the second considers the natural, social and cultural environment only as factors influencing the formation of personality and the development of his individuality.

The differentiation of pedagogical knowledge and direct knowledge about nature-conforming education led to the emergence of ideologically similar directions, such as folk, free, natural, personality-oriented, health-saving, environmental, noospheric education, etc. Correlation with them expands the understanding of the phenomenon being studied and deepens the scientific understanding of its features.

Natural and (or) free education are also synonymous with nature-conforming education in scientific literature. Their key idea is to follow the natural development of the child and realize his natural potential, which is ensured by the creation of an educational space as a natural environment for personal development, in which the pupil is free to choose goals, content, methods of activity and makes direct contact with phenomena and objects of knowledge.

In the implementation of health-preserving education, as a rule, the goals, content, and methods of implementing the educational process are regulated in accordance with the individual age-related capabilities of the child and the characteristics of his psychophysical development. If the semantic content of this type of education is focused on preserving the health of the individual, then nature-conforming education is focused on its preservation and development.

Nature-conforming education has similarities with environmental education in that it determines the need to harmonize a person's relationship with the environment in which his life takes place. The difference is that nature-conforming education in the chain of relationships "man-environment" also accumulates deep scientific knowledge about the inner nature of man, which to a large extent should determine the process of his development and formation.

The theory of noospheric education transmits ideas similar to nature-conforming education, while defining the human mind as a means of his harmonious relationship with himself and the environment. Noospheric education is understood as "the process of forming a rational personality, possessing the highest internal spiritual, intellectual and cultural content, capable of self-improvement and self-development, and in their active life – of reasonable behavior in relation to nature, society and man" (Рыбка, 2008: 447). If noospheric education focuses on the development of the rational principle of human nature, capable of ensuring universal harmony, then nature-conforming education in solving this problem is aimed at the formation of an integral personality in the unity of reason and feelings.

HISTORICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL DIMENSION OF NATURE CONFORMITY

Within the framework of the historical and pedagogical dimension, which focuses attention on the sociocultural determinants of the genesis of the pedagogical phenomenon, the phenomenon of nature-conforming education is determined by the philosophical and ideological attitudes of the era, the historically established type of culture and the dynamics of the values transmitted by it. Each period of historical development of nature-conforming education determined the specifics of its content and semantic content and functional role.

The scientific and theoretical understanding and justification of the ideas of nature-conforming education was preceded by their existence in the implicit form of knowledge. Embodied in pagan traditions and practices of archaic culture (animism, totemism, fetishism, etc.), conformity with nature was manifested in the fusion of man with the natural environment and subordination to the laws of nature in all spheres of his life. Explication of the idea of conformity with nature, i.e. We find the first attempts to understand, explain and interpret it in the works of philosophers of Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance in the context of the emerging philosophical science. The ancient Greek philosopher Democritus wrote in his essay "Fragments on Education": "Nature and education are similar. Namely, education restructures a person and, transforming, creates [him a second] nature"(Демокрит, Фрагменты, 1981: 10). Aristotle saw in the natural world a prototype of art, including the art of education. He determined that art's ability to improve nature and, above all, human nature was important: "It is not nature that imitates art, but art was invented in order to compensate for the gaps that exist in nature"(Аристотель, Сочинения, 1981: 535). Hippocrates also expressed similar thoughts: "All arts are common to human nature"(Гиппократ, Сочинения, 1944: 451). The identification of human nature with the nature of art indicates his understanding of the conditionality of upbringing by the characteristics of the child's personality. The idea of conformity with nature is also explicated on the basis of the provisions of Eastern religious philosophy and is expressed in the consistency of human life and society with the laws of the cosmos in Taoism, the idea of not causing harm to living beings in Buddhism and Jainism.

The theoretical substantiation of the ideas of nature-conforming education in pedagogy is usually associated with representatives of foreign pedagogical thought of the New Age and, above all, with the Czech humanist thinker J. A. Komensky. Despite the fact that his main work, "The Great Didactics" (1632), is replete with examples of correlating the phenomena of the natural world with the phenomena and processes of human upbringing, it does not use the term "conformity with nature" itself. "Conformity to nature" is found in the works of the German thinker A. Disterweg as "naturgemäßheit". At the same time, the German teacher narrows the meaning of conformity to nature, pointing out that it is better to use this concept in a narrow

sense and not extend the principle to nature in general, "limit it only to human nature" (Дистерверг, *Оприродосообразности*, 1998).

This understanding of natural conformity served as the basis for the development and theoretical justification by A. Disterweg of the principle of cultural conformity as the consistency of education with the social nature of a person and his cultural experience. The ideas of natural conformity in the context of emerging pedagogical knowledge were reflected in the works of many teachers, for example, in the teachings of V. Rathke, who argued that "learning should proceed in accordance with the course of nature, without disturbing it" (*История*, 2001: 98). Along with the fact that conformity with nature was a requirement for the organization of education, it was translated into education as a whole, determining its content-target and procedural components. In the legacy of J.-J. Rousseau's conformity with nature formed the basis of his theory of natural education, based on the idea that the natural essence of man is embodied in natural development and is distorted in the conditions of civilization (РуссоЖ.-Ж., 1989: 16). I. G. Pestalozzi connected conformity with nature with the development of a person's natural inclinations, believed that "it is absolutely necessary to achieve conformity with nature in the development of children's mental strength" (*Песталоцци*, 1965: 91–92) and represented conformity with nature as the basis of elementary education. In the legacy of the Russian teacher L. N. Tolstoy, his theory of free education is presented in accordance with nature. For K. D. Ushinsky, conformity with nature was embodied in pedagogical anthropology, for K. N. Ventzel– in the theory of cosmic education, for P. P. Blonsky– in pedology.

The essential and semantic perspectives of the category being studied today are mainly determined by the ideological attitudes of biocentrism, ecocentrism and cultural centrism. This determines the possibility of theoretical differentiation of the principle of conformity to nature in the system of pedagogical categories and its definition as a meta-principle of humanistic pedagogy, health-saving pedagogy, correctional pedagogy, neuropedagogy, noospheric pedagogy, folk pedagogy, ecopedagogy.

The genesis of nature-conforming education was accompanied by changes in its content and semantic content, which were due to its connection with ideal conformity. At each historical stage, the idea of conformity with nature reflects correspondence to a certain ideal,

which represents the highest value and determines the universe, nature as such and the nature of existence. Cosmocentrism of Antiquity, theocentrism of the Middle Ages, anthropocentrism of the Renaissance, science-centrism of the Enlightenment, sociocentrism, cultural centrism, eco(bio)centrism of modern times and other “centrism” indicate a concentration around value, act as “a way of identifying or self-identifying anything, in which the selected fragment things are considered as their focus, and everything is drawn towards this center, core, basis” (Автономова, 2008: 153). “Conformity” in this case presupposes the coordination of various spheres of human life, including education, with the dominant value of a certain historical era. This gives rise to diverse forms of manifestation of nature-conforming education in its broad sense: nature-aligned, God-conforming, culture-conforming, human-conforming, eco (bio) conforming, etc.

The essence of nature-conforming education is revealed to a greater extent not through focusing on what it is necessary to coordinate education with, with what nature, but on the need, in principle, to coordinate this process with the surrounding world as the environment of human life. Nature-conforming education is aimed at the organic adaptation of a person to the world of nature and society, the ecological formation of his unconditional connection with the environment. Man is a part of nature and therefore it is necessary to coordinate the process of his upbringing with the general objective laws of the environment and the internal nature of the individual.

This idea permeates all historical periods. In Antiquity, it was reflected in the identity of the microcosm with the macrocosm. A. F. Losev argues that in early Greek philosophy there was no significant difference between space and man and it was believed that “what is in space is also in man, and what is in man is also in space. Macrocosm and microcosm are one and the same” (Лосев, История, 1994: 494). Accordingly, knowledge of the surrounding world and human activity were carried out through extrapolation of the functions and properties of the whole to the part, known to unknown knowledge, not verified by experience. Aristotle believed that a person must develop, through education and experience, a special ability of the soul – phronesis, which provides “the ability to apply knowledge of the general (the nature of existence) to the situation of a particular case” (Аристотель, Сочинения, 1983: 31). In the Middle Ages, the unity of man and

environment finds expression in the conformity of man to God, that is, the subordination of the particular to the general, the element to the whole. In modern times, this idea is clearly represented in the pansophical concept of J. A. Comenius that individual parts of the world contain the image of a common divine world. In this case, one should agree with the opinion of E. N. Medynsky that conformity with nature in the pedagogical works of Ya. A. Komensky appears not so much as the consistency of education with the external natural world, but with nature as a whole, including human life and activity. (Медынский, 1956: 53). In XX–XXI centuries the unity of the natural world and their interdependence are substantiated in the teachings of V. I. Vernadsky about the noosphere, in the theories of new co-natural universalism, etc.

GENERAL SCIENTIFIC MEASUREMENT OF NATURE CONFORMITY

The general scientific dimension makes it possible to go beyond the boundaries of understanding natural conformity as a purely pedagogical phenomenon, to deepen the understanding of its essence, the reasons for its occurrence and development. According to E.D. Dneprov, such a way out correlates with the regularity of historical and scientific knowledge, which consists in “the need for constant and deep study of it [history] in the light of the latest achievements and tasks of science, the need for a comprehensive account and comprehensive analysis of all previously known, newly illuminated and newly discovered phenomena and facts in their mutual influence and interconnection” (Днепров, 1986: 99).

Natural conformity as a phenomenon contains the possibilities and mechanisms for obtaining new knowledge through its transfer from one area to another. For example, even in ancient times, people used natural (biomorphic) images as a model of some artificial objects (Байкова, 2011). Later, the organization of social life determined the need to model various social phenomena and processes, including education. Not only external, but also internal characteristics of objects of the natural world were projected onto them, determined by existing knowledge, religious beliefs and the basic values of historical eras. In Antiquity, the surrounding world was a macrocosm and contained a model of perfection, the focus of logos and harmony. Conformity with the macrocosm determined the focus of education on

the formation of similar properties in a person, first of all, the qualities of a comprehensively developed and harmonious personality.

The renewed interest in nature in the modern era, due to the development, mainly, of the natural sciences, determined the growth of scientific knowledge about nature. Phenomena of the natural world were projected onto education, vivid examples of which we find in the "Great Didactics" of Ya. A. Komensky. In this case, education is not consistent with the external characteristics of a natural object, but with its internal properties, patterns, and functions. Continuity, rhythm, consistency, gradualness, systematicity, timeliness, etc., acting as laws of natural phenomena and processes, were identified by the thinker with pedagogical laws.

Along with biomorphism, the development of ideas of nature-conforming education was also determined by sociomorphism, which, on the contrary, was a projection onto the natural world of the laws of the social structure of society, social phenomena and processes. The endowment of natural phenomena and processes, objects of living and inanimate nature with social characteristics led to the understanding of natural conformity as conformity with the culture that man has embodied in nature. Human nature also became socially conditioned, which determined such a concept as the social nature of the individual. Traditions and social norms were perceived as natural, which focused on their observance and excluded the possibility of critical reflection.

In the course of mastering reality, man projected onto the surrounding world and human properties, "humanizing nature," endowing it with additional, non-typical characteristics, which in modern science is reflected in the phenomenon of anthropomorphization. This way of thinking allowed him to carry out cognition by getting closer to objects that were "alien" to himself, "translating" the external into the internal. Numerous god-men of Antiquity and the Middle Ages also concentrated human properties. N. A. Berdyaev notes: "Man creates God in his own image and likeness and puts into God not only the best in his image, but also the worst. God, who reveals himself to human consciousness, bears the stamp of anthropomorphism and sociomorphism" (Бердяев, 1939). Conformity with nature as conformity with God presupposed compliance with the ideal of man contained in the Almighty.

The ideas of natural conformity have become actively widespread in modern times for a number of reasons, one of which was the

formation of pedagogy as an independent science, accompanied by its separation from philosophy, which was caused by the active development of scientific knowledge in general. A keen interest in natural science knowledge in this period determined the search for pedagogical patterns, models of education and training in the natural world. This period represents the stage of the “meeting” of science and art. In the course of cultural and historical changes, the development of scientific knowledge, natural images began to acquire rational characteristics, which, according to E.V. Baykova, marked the “combination of science and art” (Байкова, 2011).

Also, nature-conforming education, using figurative means of thinking, demonstrates the unity of the emotional and rational principles in understanding pedagogical phenomena and processes, which is a necessary condition for scientific knowledge in general. From the point of view of the American philosopher T. Nagel, “the unknown must be included in the space of scientific knowledge in its unknown form, captured metaphorically, aesthetically, otherwise scientific knowledge is not complete in itself” (Титова, 2013: 15). All this characterizes conformity with nature and the nature-conforming education derived from it, on the one hand, as a synthesis of the science of education and art, on the other, as the most complete and deep scientific knowledge about education.

Ideas of natural conformity are updated during critical periods of human history, which are accompanied by a change of paradigms and the formation of a new scientific picture of the world. These processes determine new meanings in the understanding of man, culture, and nature, which are actively expressed through metaphors, identities and analogies. Regarding the theory of education, these means perform a preparatory function at the preparatory stage of a new conceptualization of pedagogical experience. This indicates that the ideas of nature-conforming education determine new paradigms of education, defining goal-setting modifications for this process.

Due to the projection of phenomena and patterns of the natural and social world onto education, nature-conforming education is characterized both by the unity of natural science and humanities knowledge, and by connections directly between the branches of humanities: pedagogy, philosophy, psychology, history, sociology, etc. This feature determines the demand for nature-conforming education in conditions when “we increasingly specialize not in sciences, but in

problems” (Вернадский, 1977: 54). The natural diversity of connections between sciences, the desire of scientific knowledge for integration and a comprehensive systemic analysis of the phenomena of objective reality allows us to more effectively solve current problems and practical tasks of education.

Analysis of the phenomenon of nature-conforming education in the context of general scientific knowledge made it possible to identify its following features:

- the ideas of nature-conforming education, in view of the mechanisms contained in it for the transfer of knowledge from one area to another, determined the development of scientific and theoretical knowledge about education, are updated when scientific paradigms change, and represent opportunities for the development of a modern theory of education, the search for new ideas and approaches to personality formation;

- nature-conforming education is the result of a synthesis of natural science and humanities knowledge and is based on a scientific understanding of the relationship between natural and social processes; and connections directly between branches of the humanities: pedagogy, philosophy, psychology, history, sociology, etc.;

- nature-conforming education reflects the unity of the emotional and rational principles in the understanding of pedagogical phenomena and processes, which is a necessary condition for the completeness of scientific knowledge.

Thus, nature-conforming education is a unique pedagogical phenomenon, distinguished by its content-semantic multidimensionality and multidimensionality, which manifests itself within the framework of the pedagogical, historical, pedagogical and general scientific dimensions. His ideas are reflected in many areas of pedagogical theory and practice, respond to the challenges of our time and require systematic and holistic study in the context of a changed reality.

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ОБРАЗОВАЊЕ У СКЛАДУ СА ПРИРОДОМ КАО НАУЧНИ ФЕНОМЕН

Резиме: Чланак актуализује идеју природности у контексту савремене педагошке теорије и образовне праксе. Карактеришу се особине представа о природности са тродимензионалне позиције: сопствено педагошке, историјско-педагошке и опште научне. Открива се суштина природњачког смера васпитања и издвајају се се његове карактеристичне особине у систему педагошких појмова и идејно блиских педагошких праваца, као што народно, слободно, природно, лично оријентисано, заштита здравља, еколошко иноосферно образовање. Определује се садржајно-смисаона вишедимензионалност педагошког феномена и потражња за његовим идејама у условима нових изазова савремености. Предочава се улога природњачког васпитања у активизацији људског фактора, подстицање мишљења о очувању природе, њених ресурса са одговорним понашањем млађе генерације, која доприноси формирању холистичке и хармоничне личности, способне за креативно стварање и самоостварење у условима амбивалентности и сложености спољног окружења.

Кључне речи: природност, природњачко васпитање, принцип васпитања, спољашња природа, људска природа.

