

PROSPECTS OF FORMING HEALTH-SAVING EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Vodolazska T.V.

M. V. Ostrogradsky Poltava Regional In-Service Teacher Training Institute

Annotation. *Purpose:* to present the results of a special study group of primary school teachers of Poltava region. To substantiate the conditions of formation of health saving educational field of elementary school. *Material:* the study involved 78 teachers from 14 schools of the Poltava region. *Results:* is investigated the effect of the educational field on the health of primary school children, are highlighted the essential characteristics of health saving educational field. On the basis of analysis of the data by the research team are considered: the components of the field which affect on the health of students, the development trends of health saving educational field of elementary school. *Conclusions:* the prospects for development of health saving educational field should be a transformation class-lesson system, the creation of multifunctional educational field, the use of health saving learning technologies, change of the evaluation system of personal students' achievements, the use of integrated assessment of the junior schoolboy emotional sphere, the development of new forms of cooperation between the teacher and the students.

Key words: educational, environment, health saving, safe, emotional, well-being.

Introduction

Among the key areas of the national education policy defined by the National Strategy of Education Development in Ukraine until 2021, there is formation of the health saving environment. The large-scale international projects and programs such as InnoSchool (<http://innoschool.tkk.fi/>), TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey) (<http://www.oecd.org/edu/talis>), «Child-Friendly Schools» (UNICEF) (http://www.unicef.org/education/index_focus_schools.html) etc. are dedicated to search for the best school environment, which a person is needed, healthy, happy and feels protected and secure in. The results of national and international research proved as follows: new pedagogical concepts of the educational milieu are required [3, 10]; schools must act in the interests of children, ensuring pupils' safety and health [1, 9, 13, 15]; teachers have got to be ready to design and implement new models of environments [4, 8, 16].

Scientific researches by O. Ye. Antonova, V. F. Bazarny, M. V. Hrynyova, V. M. Yefimova, N. D. Karapuzova and others have been dedicated to formation of the health saving educational milieu. I. O. Bayeva, D. V. Ivanov, V. I. Panov, Ye. V. Rybak, S. Sergejev, V. I. Slobodchikov, A. N. Tubelsky have been engaged in modeling of a health friendly educational milieu. Researchers have studied issue of creating the conditions [13], under which an educational milieu would be psychologically safe, analyzed the role of social factors in the personality formation process [12], explored the influence of the educational milieu on the formation of children's emotional resilience of, and substantiated the health saving activities in schools [1, 9].

The younger generation health issues mean solving problems of arranging child's living space. The school's role consists in optimal organization of the educational process, creation of the development conditions meeting the children's needs.

In view of the above, it is necessary to solve the contradictions between: ever-increasing demands of society to ensure the children's health maintenance conditions during their learning and the teachers' reluctance to modeling the health saving educational milieu; a large number of studies on the pupil health and lack of scientific and methodological support of primary school teachers.

The study has been carried out in the framework of research "Models of Interrelation between Research and Educational Practices in the Conditions of Transformation of Ukrainian Society" by M. V. Ostrogradsky Poltava Regional In-Service Teacher Training Institute (National Registration Number: 0110U004628).

Aim, task, material and methods.

Aim of the research is to summarize the experience of the task group of primary school teachers in Poltava region on impact of educational milieu on the health of primary school children. The outlined goal has predetermined solving problems in the relationship between theory and educational practice. Theoretically, substantiating the conditions of formation of the health saving educational milieu of elementary school; practically, analyzing the operating results of the task group and specifying the development prospects of the primary school educational milieu.

Results.

The pupils' health maintenance problem impelled Poltava region teachers to search for paths of creating the health saving educational milieu in primary schools. The task group of the primary school teachers operated on *Primary School Educational Milieu: Problems and Prospects for Development* at M. V. Ostrogradsky Poltava Regional In-Service Teacher Training Institute (supervisor – T. V. Vodolazska). The objectives to be achieved were reviewing the conditions of formation and features of functioning an educational milieu in pedagogical theory and practice, substantiating the educational milieu model appropriate to the needs of children; developing a performance "scorecard" of elementary school educational milieu.

Primary school teachers from 14 secondary schools in Poltava region (total of 78 people) participated in work of the task group. The research was conducted during 2009 to 2012. Research methods: theoretical ones are analysis of scientific psychology-and-pedagogical literature on the matter; empirical ones are survey of teachers, study of school experience, observation.

The findings of the task group were discussed and piloted during district-level and regional seminars, the International Research Conference “Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of Health Saving Educational Milieu of Secondary Schools and Universities” (April 14, 2011, Poltava), Nationwide Research Conference “Psychological and Didactic Principles of Forming The Educational Environment of Educational and Research Activities of Children” (April 24-25, 2012, Kirovohrad), Nationwide Research Conference “Formation and Development of The Professional Competence of Primary School Teachers in The Conditions of Implementing State Standard of Primary Education” (April 24-25, 2013, Kharkiv), were reported in periodicals such as “Postmetodyka”, “Imidzh Suchasnoho Pedahoha”, “Osvita Poltavshchiny”.

A poll of 156 trainees at M. V. Ostrogradsky Poltava Regional In-Service Teacher Training Institute found that 98.6% of respondents defined creating secure and health saving conditions of learning to be the prime objective facing the school. However, only 43.4% of teachers considered themselves prepared to model the educational environment.

Analysis of the poll results (see the table) showed that teachers were aware of the relevance and necessity of forming the health saving educational milieu but did not have the theoretical and methodological basis for the practical implementation of that objective.

Table

Indicators of influence on the process of forming the health saving educational milieu by teachers

Reasons for the teachers' unpreparedness to model the health saving educational milieu of primary school	Percentage of respondents
Poor knowledge on modeling the health saving educational milieu of primary school	12.83
Lack of work experience based on the milieu approach	44.88
Lack of initiative and desire to change anything	30.76
Existence of interference from the school administration, representatives of education authorities	11.53

The aforesaid prompted the task group to thoroughly examine the impact of the educational milieu on children's health, search for ways of modeling the health saving educational milieu of elementary school.

The first step was exploration of scientific psycho-pedagogical and methodological literature on the issue, identifying the factors that affect the quality of the educational milieu of primary school.

Analysis of the literature has shown that many scholars (I. Bayeva, D. Ivanov, N. Rassokha, V. Slobodchikov and others) treat safety as the key characteristics of educational school milieu, and a psychologically safe educational milieu as a condition for positive personal growth of its members.

A safe educational milieu of school is where most of the participants have a positive attitude to it, high-level need satisfaction index and that of the protection from psychological abuse. The psychologically safe educational milieu serves as an effective interpersonal interaction that promotes emotional well-being of pupils and teachers, development of the mental health, personal growth, and harmonizing a personality.

The health saving educational milieu is defined by scientists as a set of pedagogical conditions, the physiological components promoting the implementation of adaptive abilities of pupils, and the factors affecting the maintenance and development of their health (<http://nauka-pedagogika.com>).

According to V. M. Yefimova, the health saving educational milieu is a pupil's environment, existing or virtual, which there are interconnected educational, social, cultural, psychological, hygienic conditions conducive to physical and personal learners' development and corresponding the pupils' age, sex, psychophysiological features, patterns of growth and development of the children in (http://archive.nbuv.gov.ua/portal/soc_gum/znpbdpu/Ped/2011_2/Efimo.pdf).

Resorting to the milieu approach theory [12] made it possible to specify the main provisions: achievement of personhood is realized due to the influence of the environment that a person is in; the environment is by a teacher's hands converts into a means of managing the achievement of personhood; the environment is seen as a set of dynamic and static components.

If we determine child's health as a pedagogical aim, and educational environment as a means to achieve this aim, we can identify the system of the actions aimed at building the health saving educational milieu with the environment.

State of comfort, safety, security, positive world perception and interest is what is indispensable to the effective educational activities in elementary school. A child who is in uncomfortable condition for some reason or another can not fully engage in the learning process, it means that schooling does not reach its goal.

Among the factors affecting the child's health, the task group has distinguished the following:

- discrepancy between training and assessment methods and techniques and the pupils' age peculiarities;
- intensifying the training process, which is reflected in the increase of educational material;
- low physical activity, predominant “sitting-listening pedagogy” leading a child to physical immaturity and spiritual nonage;

- authoritarian style of pedagogy accounting for fatigue and neuroticism;
- low level of teachers' knowledge on developmental physiology, psychology, pupils' healthcare.

A modern primary school teacher builds up the educational process taking into account not only the age peculiarities but also specific features of an individual body development, physiological and psychical processes, extensively using any information on maintenance and promotion of the health. That's what encouraged teachers from Karlivka district, Poltava region, to study the skill formation of writing in a single-line copybook. The classroom experience has shown that writing in a single-line copybook not only promotes calligraphy and writing literacy in primary school children, but also provides the health saving effect: maintaining optimal functional condition of the body, stable level of child's work capacity [11]. A question to be resolved was what should be the primary school children tools to be able to write during 4 to 5 lessons. According to the teachers' observations, using a ballpoint pen causes unpleasant tactile sensation, fast fatigue and neurosis of the pupils.

Survey of the teachers has showed the primary school reform taking place now in Ukraine should be attributed primarily to the transformation of class lesson system, of "sitting and listening pedagogy", forms of teacher-pupil interaction, changes in the personal achievements evaluation system. The numerous data suggest the educational milieu exactly is now the source of a large number of "didactogen" factors that contribute to deviations in the children's health and development. According to the Russian scientist V. Bazarny, these include: closed rooms and limited spaces, scarcity in natural sensory stimuli, growing amount of abstract information, and more.

Learning in elementary school should not be limited to the walls of the classroom. In order to "balance" different ways of opening up and interpretation of the life lessons are held in the workshops, studios, laboratories, in the open [5, p.29]. As proved by the scientists, landscape of the area that a child lives in, architecture and design of the buildings, specificity of the environment organization significantly influences the child's formation [4, p.56].

The schools that had chosen the model of the educational milieu according to V. Bazarny enabled a free movement of the children as lack of physical activity causes morbidity of the pupils. Fundamental changes related to the school furniture. Stand-up desks came to be in the classrooms, which allowed the pupils to work in various poses, with various levels of physical activity. The teachers noted the opportunity to change the posture several times for the lesson reduced fatigue and helped hyperactive children. Under these work conditions, the children could easier concentrate, showed the higher level of performance, self-control and discipline. In order to maintain and strengthen the health of children in schools, outdoor lessons have been introduced [7, p.46].

Studying the foreign experience [14] urged the teachers to examine emotional well-being of the primary school children. The teachers' work was aimed at developing an effective model of the educational environment, which is meant to develop forming the primary school children's emotional well-being [6, p. 36]. Emotional and personal characteristics of the educational process agents were taken as criteria of the educational milieu quality: self-actualization, an individual's orientation in communication, index of centration on oneself and others, level of emotional tension.

The level of emotional well-being of our pupils is often much lower than their physical health, and the evaluation process is due in no small part to it. Given the negative influence of the evaluation on the primary school children's health, we need "technology of safe evaluation" [2, p.209].

The emotional well-being of an individual is directly linked to self-evaluation: only with self-acceptance and positive attitude to themselves, people can experience a state of psychological comfort and confidence. Success in school, at work, in life is more dependent on the subjective view of their capabilities than the actual level of the capability.

The emotional discomfort in the form of feelings of emotional tension, dissatisfaction with oneself, anxiety, and suspense may be a risk factor that disturbs personality development. Therefore, the teachers of Karlivka secondary school No 4 have selected "Schools without Tears" model, where sets for prediction of success and positive attitude to their own experiences have been formed in a child since the first days of the teaching.

Developmental effects of the educational milieu were examined by the teachers from the specialized educational complexes Nos. 10, 26 ("Step by Step"). Particular attention was given to creation of a multipurpose room for primary schoolchildren with a division into independent learning centers, which enables to unite, form interest groups, and satisfy needs for communication.

The experience has shown that the creation of the learning centers in elementary schools can solve the problem of child aggression [3, p.14]. Availability of the centers in elementary school grades, their variability and occupancy promotes rapid child's adaptation to school, serves as a precautionary measure of the child aggression. Educational challenge of emotional relaxation, removal of the emotional tension is solved in the area of physical activity of children, in playing rooms and Research Corners. Children usually sense intuitively where exactly and in what ways they can relieve the internal stress and anger without hurting others, that means where the subject-social environment is organized according to certain rules [5, p.28].

A recreation (relaxation) center helps a child to mentally and physically relieve. This is where children master how to switch to rest. Optimally organized, diverse educational milieu encourages a lively cognitive activity in children, mobilizes the processes of thinking, has a positive influence on the emotional sphere, and provides the health saving effect.

One of the important factors in the development of a healthy child is to provide an essential need for communication based on trust. The research has established that dissatisfaction of the need is one of the reasons of

emotional imbalance, aggressiveness, destructive behavior in children. Psychological conditions for a free communication between a teacher and a child can be created by abolition of the teaching department that is a mandatory attribute of the traditional school. Rejection of teacher's table is an external manifestation of the transition to the collaboration between teacher and pupils who feel equal participants in the learning process in this situation.

It is equally important for the environment to give a sense of stability and security to a child. Certain guaranty to meet a child's need of security is availability of accustomed daily routines in environment, order. If there are no regulations and discipline in a child's environment, it feels vulnerable to the external environment, begins to look for a more stable living area. So some children become uncontrolled, impulsive, hyperactive, embittered, aggressive or anxious. The feeling of security is associated with recurrent events, daily rotation of which results in stability and certainty.

While modeling the educational milieu for primary school children, we can not forget about playing and its therapeutic properties. The main goal of play therapy is to make children aware of interpretation of their personal actions and conflicts through the play situations created. It's impossible to overestimate the importance of play in the emotional development of the younger pupils. However, you ought to teach children not only to feel, but also realize modality and intensity of these feelings. Special classes (sketches, staging, exercises) aimed at developing and correcting various aspects of a child's psyche are helpful in the primary school teachers' work.

Unfortunately, current State Sanitary Regulations and Standards do not allow a teacher to radically modify the educational environment. The class-and-lesson system techniques still prevail in education.

Issue of modeling the educational milieu of primary school must be solved at the national level by reviewing the relevant requirements for school buildings, classrooms, equipment and facilities. There must be up-to-date requirements for equipment of the primary school classrooms that variable furniture, retreat centers, play corners, mini-labs etc. will be provided in.

Conclusions.

School with the health saving educational milieu is an educational institution that provides the balance between adaptive abilities of a child's body and the constantly changing environment. This is the educational system there are methods of psychological, medical and social support for the pupils at each age, continuous diagnostics and health measures for promoting healthy schoolchildren's lifestyles, methods of involving them in the health saving activities, ways of forming the personal health concepts, developing the skills related to self-regulation of emotional states, self-control in stressful situations.

Special requirements are applied to teachers who must be sincere, honest in their dealings with the pupils, have a positive attitude to the children and empathy. In this regard, it becomes important to specially organize training the educators to teach them to model the educational milieu where all participants in the educational process feel protected, have emotional comfort, satisfaction of basic needs, maintain and strengthen their health.

Prospects for follow-up studies are seen by us in the development of scientific and methodological support of preparation of the primary school teachers for modeling the educational milieu, improving the quality of teacher training in the in-service teacher training system.

References:

- 1 Bazarny V. F. *Narodnoie obrazovanie* [People's Education], 2013, vol.2, pp.15-20.
- 2 Vlasenko V. A. *Narodnoie obrazovanie* [People's Education], 2012, vol.5, pp.208-213.
- 3 Vodolazska T. V. *Postmetodyka* [Post method], 2010, vol.5, pp.52-57.
- 4 Vodolazska T. V. *Postmetodyka* [Post method], 2012, vol.5, pp.13-17.
- 5 Vodolazska T. V. *Postmetodyka* [Post method], 2012, vol.2, pp.26-30.
- 6 Derij I. *Osvita Poltavshchiny* [Education of Poltava land], 2011, vol.23-24, pp. 35-37.
- 7 Dudko S. H. *Postmetodyka* [Post method], 2010, vol.5, pp.45-47.
- 8 Zair-Bek Ye. S. *Postmetodyka* [Post method], 2012, vol.2, pp.7-11.
- 9 Karapuzova N. D., Pochinok Ye. A., Pomohaybo V. M. *Postmetodyka* [Post method], 2012, vol.5, pp.8-12.
- 10 Kuvayeva Ya. V. *Narodnoie obrazovanie* [People's Education], 2011, vol.9, pp. 41-46.
- 11 Liapota L. O. Shtan'ko O. M. *Formuvannia hrafichnikh navichok pis'ma u zoshiti v odnu liniuu* [Skill Formation of Writing in a Single-Line Copybook], Poltava, POIPPO, 2009, 212 p.
- 12 Manuylov Yu. S. *Sredovoj podkhod v vospitanii* [Milieu Approach in Education], Kostanay, MCST, 1997, 224 p.
- 13 Sergejev S. F., Yakunin V. A. *Narodnoie obrazovanie* [People's Education], 2012, vol.6, 163-169 pp.
- 14 Depondt L., Kog M., Moons J. *Een doos vol gevoelenz*. Leuven, Centrum Voor, 2008, 96 p.
- 15 Murray J. P., Wenger A. F. Z., Downes E. A., Terrazas S. B. *Educating health professionals in low-resource countries: a global approach*. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company. 2011, 120 p.
- 16 Wilson B. Metaphors for instruction: Why we talk about learning environments. *Educational Technology*, 1995, vol.35(5), pp. 25-30.

Information about the author:

Vodolazska T.V.: ORCID: 0000-0002-9953-2802; vodolazskaja@rambler.ru; M. V. Ostrogradsky Poltava Regional In-Service Teacher Training Institute; Oktyabrskaya str., 64, Poltava, 36029, Ukraine

Cite this article as: Vodolazska T.V. Prospects of forming health-saving educational environment of elementary school. *Pedagogics, psychology, medical-biological problems of physical training and sports*, 2014, vol.2, pp. 15-19. doi:10.6084/m9.figshare.923509

The electronic version of this article is the complete one and can be found online at: <http://www.sportpedagogy.org.ua/html/arhive-e.html>

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/deed.en>).

Received: 02.12.2013
Published: 28.12.2013