The Ability to Study
and Conflict Competence

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The question of the genesis of conflict competence is a key aspect both for theorists of developmental psychology, conflict resolution studies and for practicing pedagogues. The research attempts to identify the key contribution of the primary school age and the age of adolescence in the development of the skill to resolve conflicts effectively.

The results of the described experimental procedures show which educational conditions are necessary for the formation of the appropriate skills and which conditions are lacks for the effective use of the potential of every age.

For example, in elementary school full-fledged implementation of the training activities in students' group work is enough for the formation of the required skills. In the process of transition into another age group, special conditions for the transferal of the learning skills to other areas of life should be made.

Keywords: conflict competence, age new development, educational effects, primary school age, age of adolescence, reflection, organization of interaction.

1. Hypothetical model
of conflict competence formation

Conflict competence as the ability to hold contradiction in its resolution is understood as an integral personal new development. Effectiveness in resolution of a particular conflict is provided by a number of diverse abilities, skills, knowledge and orientations. Is structuring of all these skills into a single model possible? The study of the genesis of conflict competence is indeed necessary.

A hypothetical model was proposed by us to study the formation of conflict competence in the primary school age (Hassan, Privalihina, 2004) and included:

1. Willingness to overcome difficulties in activities (when faced with difficulties in activities and relationships a person does not refuse to solve them and is looking for ways to overcome them).

2. The ability to identify the subject of transformation correctly (in a conflict situation a person is able to define the differences in positions of the participants, and that requires changes and coordination).

3. Knowledge of the means of transformation of the certain type of material (a person knows how to act in a definite situation and knows how to do it).

These three areas are the development plan of conflict competence at the school ages, and

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research task is to identify the unique contribution of each age in its content.

We believe that at each age stage happens something (or should happen according to the age norms) that provides a certain level of competence development. The reasons for constructing a model of such a development should be found in the main principles of developmental psychology.

Each age is specific and unique from the point of view of the formation of mental abilities and has a specific task (E. Erikson, Y.Shvantsara, L.S. Vygotsky, D.B. Elkonin, etc.). According to the cultural-historical conception, each age is characterized by the unique social situation of development (specific to each stage the system of relations between a child and an adult), which defines the new developments that develop in a child. The ways the problems will be solved depend on the way child's interaction with the cultural environment is built and how this interaction corresponds to the age problems. New development of a certain age is not simply transferred to the next age stage, but goes there as a pattern. And this transition (which is specially made) takes a special place at the age development and proceeds as a crisis. K.N. Polivanova found out that the crisis is opening a new ideal form, the rejection of the old one and the testing of the new development of the previous period in the new space (Polivanova, 2000). In the critical period new skills and new relationships are revealed to a child, and a child tries to use them on purpose in another activity and in a different situation.

Thus, firstly, the source of creation of a new development is educational space in which a child is placed and, secondly, the special transfer is needed, it should be specially organized detachment of a new development from the activities in which it was formed. These principles give basis for speculations about the formation of conflict competence at the school age.

In elementary school, the sphere of real conflict extends from the conflicts within the family and role conflicts (typical for the pre-school age) to the subject-content conflicts and conflicts of conformance to the status requirements.

The central one, on the basis of the social situation of development, becomes a conflict between "I-know" – "I-don't-know", "I-am-able," – "I-am-not-able," every time this conflict is represented as a learning activity. This learning activity is, in fact, the activity which changes "I-am-not-able" to "I-am-able". The students should learn to detect their shortage of resources to solve the problem and find ways to eliminate the shortage. This composes the ability to study as new development of an age. The certain level of reflection is considered as an ability, which allows to determine the type of conflict and resource, necessary for its resolution. The developed methods of work with the object and methods of organization of educational interaction are resources for conflict resolution.

Conflict competence in the primary school age is formed in a situation of mutual activities of students in the process of resolution of educational tasks. Initially, an adult organizes and develops a conflict for a child, finds lack of resources and shows how to fill them, thus, giving resolution of conflicts. Then, these actions are internalized. We assume that internalization occurs in stages and in the reverse sequence to unfolding a conflict. It means that in the beginning a child learns to attract well known, but missing resources. Then, a child determines the type of the missing resources and attracts them. And finally, a child considers difficult situation as a learning task, determines the type and attracts the missing resource.

2. The content of conflict
of competence
when finishing primary school

What we discussed above, gives us an opportunity to develop a hypothesis about the content of conflict competence in elementary school. When finishing primary school, students are able to resolve the educational conflicts efficiently in the situation of group interaction, especially by organizing reflection in a group. In the individual work reflection is organized by a child on purpose when resolving only educational conflicts. Productive conflict resolution of different content is possible only with the help of an adult who models a conflict situation and controls it.

At the phenomenal level, it means that when finishing primary school in the educational conflict students initially additionally define the conditions (model a conflict situation) and then apply the appropriate ways of converting the material. They are also capable of collaboration with the other participants of the situation, which would be adequate to the task given.

Confirmation of this was obtained in the process of observation and experimental studies.

The observation was carried out during Mathematics and the Russian language lessons in the 1, 2, 3 forms where students study according to the program of developmental education by D.B. Elkonin – V.V. Davydova (hereafter – DE).

Additional monitoring was conducted at the Krasnoyarsk regional competition of students who study according to the program of developmental education.

In the result of observations phenomenal confirmation of the model of educational conflict resolution was obtained. In addition, the observation allowed to make additional conclusions:

- the stage of "finding difficulties" can be identified as a separate stage in the resolution of educational conflicts, but formation of the ability to detect the gap requires special pedagogical work .
- the stages of reflection formation in the early school years are emphasized by the criterion of the organizer of reflection.
- at the primary school age the reflective functions are given by a teacher to a group of students, and then to the other individual students.
- we can assume that when finishing the primary school the open reflection in the solution of educational tasks is found only in group work. At the individual action only partial functioning of the reflection can be observed.

It means that in order to form conflict competence, when finishing the primary school students should be able to detect errors and to find the object of transformation in the educational material. Besides, students should also be able to organize group work in order to make the effective transformation. And this requires the distinction between the material of the task and the situation of interaction regarding this problem. In itself, the appearance of such a distinction is the most important effect of educational activity.

The task of the next experimental research was the discovery of the factors of the educational space, which define the formation of the skills of educational interaction.

We assumed that the methods of organization of interaction of the younger students with each other will be developed by the students differently, depending on the direction of the teacher's actions.

Therefore, for the research we have chosen the classes, where the students studied according to the program of developmental education, and teachers actively used the forms of group work in class. However, the methods of their actions differed by systematic criterion and forms of

interaction. We tried to detect the effects of usage of different forms. The study was conducted at the experimental sites of the primary school of The Krasnoyarsk State University School "Univers" № 1 in the period from 2000 up to 2003.

As a result of the preliminary part of the research, four systems of pedagogical actions or strategies aimed at transferring the methods of organization of the educational interaction to children were described (Gallyamova, Privalihina, 2004).

Later, the experiment, based on the methodology "Mittens" (G.A.Tsukerman) was carried out with the students of the 2 and 4 forms. The modification of the methodology was to exclude the possibility of appeal to an adult-experimenter, but to include their classmate – a consultant, which was represented to the students as a person who managed to cope with the task successfully. When the work was finished, the students were interviewed.

Speech acts of children in the process of work and such fragments as appeals to the consultants and responses to the interview questions were analyzed. As a result of correlation of the selected systems of pedagogical actions with the effects in organization by children interaction with each other, which were discovered during the experiment, the relationship between the actions of the teacher in the classroom and ways of organizing by children interactions of this kind was revealed.

In the classroom, where the teacher's actions are focused on achieving results for each student individually even in collaboration with the others, where asking each other is not encouraged in the process of work and consultations are conducted according to the scheme "teacher – student", the children by the end of fourth grade, do not talk or consult with each other while performing a task, and do not ask consultants in case of difficulty.

In case if the students are allowed to talk to each other in the process of work, where there are additional conditions for the academic co-operation without a teacher ("desks of assistants'", small blackboards, "Reference Notebooks"), the majority of children in the experimental situation are able to organize interaction with each other and use the resource of another child in case of difficulty.

However, when the actions of a teacher are mainly aimed at organizing the analysis of the process of interaction and understanding the structure of such a process, a third of the test subjects demonstrated qualitative interaction.

The facts, founded in the study let us to make a conclusion that the development of educational interaction does not occur automatically because of the particular type of content of the material, but requires special organization in the teaching-studying situations.

Certain teaching strategies are especially important for the formation of the interactional skills in the primary school children and therefore require special attention of the developmental psychologists and education planners.

Experimental data show that even selection and retention of the two plans of the educational process – the subjective and organizational ones are not available to the students and they do not hold them as serving each other. Fragments of the ceasing of unproductive actions and spontaneous transition from one plane to another are found in the behavior of our test subjects as unique, and only in those children where a teacher set and consistently implemented the task of teaching the skills of interaction. Thus, the results of this experiment suggest the following conclusions.

– The level of development of skills of interaction is determined, first of all, by the strategy of teachers in organizing group work in class.

– The usage of the forms of group work (even systematic) on the lessons, by itself is not a sufficient criterion for the developments of the skills group work in students.

– They are formed most effectively when teaching the skills of interaction is an independent subject of the pedagogical activity.

3. "The ability to learn"
and the transition
to the age of adolescence

What happens to these abilities at the next age stage?

In theory, in the process of the transition to the juvenile stage, there should be separation of the new developments from the educational task. And they should work as a tool; it means that they should be consciously and specially applied to solve other tasks. What kind of tasks? According to the concept of the age of adolescence – the task of building relationships with other people, and search of their place in the social systems.

We were interested in the question whether those new developments which provide adequate age conflict competence in primary school children would be found when you switch to a different age stage and solve other tasks.

For several years we have conducted experiments to answer this question. We will try to summarize their results. It is worth mentioning that all the test subjects studied in elementary school according to the programme by Elkonin-Davydova and expert estimation give evidence of good implementation of the programs in these classes.

The first small experiment was conducted by A.N. Batina with the students of the 5th forms in two stages. At the first stage the students were asked to solve the Olympiad-type mathematical task, at the second stage in the same pair – to play the game "Faces." The core of the game is in overcoming situations that require cooperation, but it was built as a competition[1]. This game requires organization of interaction, without association with any educational material.

The subject of our study is the differences in activities in solving these two problems. Criteria for observation and the results at each stage are shown in Table 1. The solving of the first task gives evidence of the formation of the new developments at the primary school age and in the test subjects, whose work was interpreted, were included only (1), those, whose skills were confirmed experimentally, and (2) those, who really took part in the resolution of the conflict, were motivated to solve both problems. There were 14 test subjects.

Table 1. The results of the criterion-oriented observation in the process of solving the tasks of different type

Criterion	The quantity of test subjects completing **mathematical tasks**	The quantity of test subjects playing the **game**
Включенность	14	14
Correct identification of the subject of transformation	11	4
Organization of interaction relevant to the task	12	4
Orientation to co-decision	13	14
Retention of the conflict in its resolution	6	1

Thus, almost all the teenagers demonstrate the distinction between the two types of work with mathematical task and the ability to build effective collaboration to complete it, but only a small number of students (28 % of the test subjects) are able to do the same on the basis of different material, although they are oriented on co-decision and try to resolve the conflict. As a result of this work it became evident that there the transfer of skills from the educational to non-educational situation does not happen. A.N. Batina continued (quite successfully) this work searching for the pedagogical conditions that contribute to the transfer. However, this is not to be discussed in this research (ref. Frolova, 2006). We need to focus on the detection of the "traces" of contribution of the primary school age to conflict competence.

The next experimental situation concerned the task to hold the two plans – the object of activity and interaction on its behalf. Another classical procedure to the study conflicts – "externalization of the internal conflict" corresponds to these requirements. The experiment was conducted by T. Mamenko on the material of "Shipwreck"[2].

Assuming, that some abilities cannot be detected, as they are in the zone of the nearest but not actual development, we modified the method and included an adult into some groups, as a possible assistant in the organization of interaction.

The experiment proved to be very informative for the study of group work and the way of thinking of teenagers; as for this research, the key issues for the analysis were: whether preteens use the same plan for completing the task and the plan of the organization of their activities, including joint activities with their peers? Which components of the theoretical thinking are transferred to the material of organization of their activities? How is it manifested?

51 teenagers took part in the experiment. 18 of them are students of the 5th forms and и 33 – are students of the 7th forms. In the process of observation, we distinguished between two plans: 1. work with the content – the choice of subjects, seasoning of the selection and resolution of conflicts related to discontinuity and resistance of the material; 2. organizational activities – statement of the purpose, planning the actions to achieve it, the control of performance and results, organization of the group work.

We analyzed qualitative indicators – presence \ absence of the certain actions in group work and quantitative indicators – the number of statements concerning the subject of observation. The results of the analysis:

There were no qualitative differences in the behavior of the 5th- and 7th-graders in the process of resolution of the game conflict. Consequently, further we present data about all the test subjects.

1. When the task is given, we can see such new developments as reflection, analysis and planning. The teens could explain the choice of subjects, were interested in the reasons of selecting items by other student (both at the stage of group work, and at the stage of the work of the team leaders) – **36 % of all the statements.**

2. Such methods as selection and discussion of the tactics of their actions, orientation and following the selected tactics in further work, asking other people's opinions about the proposals that were made were episodic in the replicas of the students – **3 % of the statements**. But they are not used as methods of group work, the students do not use the prompts an adult. Consequently, these methods of actions, typical for the conflict-competent behavior, are not subjective.

3. Such a method as emphasizing of other people's activities, and their evaluation as the actions, which can influence the winning / losing

situation does not take place – **1 statement** which was not perceived by the team.

4. The manifestation of reflection on the basis of organization of their activities were statements, made by some students, about the answer, which is supposed to be correct, about the choice of the team leader, and fixation, that other student tries to make the better list for the team – less than **2 % of the statements**. Identification of the team leaders' aim as "advocating their lists". But these components were not used in group work.

It was noted, that the team leaders in the work of the expert council did not consider their teams as a resource in negotiations, the teams also didn't consider the possibility of their participation at the stage of making general list.

5. There was organization of a check of the list in one of the teams and preparation of the general list at the stage of the two team leaders' work only after the prompt of an adult. In the zone of nearest development we also noticed such modes of actions as taking into account the reasons for the actions of another person, organization of the checks of own activities, organization of group work with the help of the means of external organization (general list, scheme, plan).

Thus, we can conclude that the plan of organization of work and interaction in the team is not identified by the teenagers as an object of transformation. The abilities, which were manifested in the work with the content, are not used in the organization of interaction. If an adult makes the plan of actions and represents it as a separate task – the teenagers are capable of reflexive actions for the effective organization of interaction according to the problem to be solved.

Our expectations, regarding the dynamics of the abilities according to the age, were not proved. It appears, at least for this group of the test subjects, that the abilities, which were formed in the primary school, did not develop at the next

age stage, are kept as a ready tool, and become actual only in the context, which is recognized as adequate to this set of abilities -namely, the educational task. For us, it means that the distinction between the two plans of actions does not automatically become "personal" skill, and ability to organize interaction, adequate to the task given, doesn't go beyond the educational situation.

Resume

The stages of detection difficulties, finding contradictions and use of the appropriate ways to transform the material are necessary and important in conflict resolution.

At the stage of the primary school age conflict competence is determined by the willingness to overcome the difficulties, the ability to find a gap in the material and organize interaction, according to the transformational tasks.

The key factors in the educational process, which determine the development of this level of competence are the content of the educational process (it should be made in the form of completion and construction of the educational tasks) and pedagogical activities of the teachers aimed at organization of the educational cooperation (organization of interaction should be a separate subject for the students and the subject of purposeful formation for a teacher).

However, the ability to study, providing a certain level of conflict competence, when finishing the primary school, is not "involved" in the sphere of resolution of a new type of conflict, and provides only educational activity of teenagers. At goes without saying, that the age of adolescence, makes its contribution to the development of the competence, but if we want such a valuable "baggage" to be in demand and become the resource for the development of the new skills, the separate pedagogical work, devoted to the transfer, is required. The core

of this work, in our opinion, is presentation of the sphere of interaction and communication as a separate subject of activity, significant and important for the students in the wider context.

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1. There are strips on the table in front of the test subjects with the elements of "faces" – eyes, nose and mouth. The faces are made by moving the strips. In the middle the strips are parted by a screen, giving each player the equal number of details. The screen doesn't give an opportunity to see the playing area of the second player. It is technically impossible to make the equal number of faces. The instruction to the test subjects: "You see the table game, where your task is to make as many faces as possible at your playing area. Now they are separated and collected in a wrong way. Your partner will do the same at his/her side of the playing area, you can't talk to him/her or do something together. The game lasts about 10-15 minutes, but you can finish it earlier if both players want to do this".

2. The test subjects are divided into teams. There are 3 members in each team. After description of the imaginary situation of the shipwreck the following instructions are given:
"Your task is to define the degree of importance of the items in this situation from the list given. The most important is given number 1, the less important – number 10. All the items must get numbers from 1 up to 10. Remember, that all the items must have numbers and two different items can't have the same number. The team, which list is similar to the list with the correct answers wins".
When the teams made the list, the following instruction is given: "Now, when you made up your decision, it is necessary to organize an expert council which should come up with the final solution about this task. This solution will be the correct answer, the correct list. This list will be compared with the other lists and the winner will be chosen. Let me remind, that the list which is similar to the list with the correct answers wins. One representative of each team should work in the council." The instructions to the representatives of the teams: "You are experts. Each expert is supposed to sign the general decision, which won't be valid without his/her signature."

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Умение учиться
и конфликтная компетентность

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Вопрос о генезисе конфликтной компетентности является одним из ключевых как для теоретиков психологии развития и конфликтологии, так и для педагогов-практиков. В статье предпринята попытка обнаружения ключевых вкладов младшего школьного и подросткового возрастов в развитие умения эффективно разрешать конфликты.

Результаты описанных экспериментальных процедур показывают, какие образовательные условия необходимы для формирования соответствующих умений и каких условий не достает для эффективного использования возможностей каждого возраста. Так, в начальной школе для формирования требуемых умений достаточно полноценной реализации учебной деятельности в групповой работе школьников. При переходе же в следующий возрастной этап необходимо специальное построение условий для переноса навыков из учебной во внеучебную сферу.

Ключевые слова: конфликтная компетентность, возрастные новообразования, образовательные эффекты, младший школьный возраст, подростковый возраст, рефлексия, организация взаимодействия.