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## **Self-Knowledge and Self-Attitude of Educational Students Groups in the Trainings of Personal Growth**

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*The present study examines changes of self-knowledge and self-attitude of students – future psychologists from the first to the fifth year. The trainings of the personal growth are the most effective way for the development of these processes. Therefore, these trainings are often included in the curriculum of Psychological faculties. Annually the research examined the effectiveness of the personal growth training for students – future psychologists of educational (stable) groups. The study tested self-knowledge and self-attitude of students using self-reports, “Twenty statements of self-attitude Test-Kuhn M., McPartland T.”, and projective drawing technique before and after the training. The result revealed that the values of self-knowledge and self-attitude of stable educational students groups at the social level were much higher than the values of these parameters at the physical and reflexive levels. At the same time the physical level of self-consciousness correlates with the reflexive level and inversely correlates with the social level. Consequently, the fixation on the social images of self-causes defense mechanisms and prevents the experience of physical and reflexive images of Myself. Thus, personal growth trainings in stable educational groups have inhibitory effects on the personal and professional development of students as they block the growth of their self-knowledge and self-attitude.*

*Keywords: self-knowledge, self-attitude, personal growth training, physical, social and reflexive levels of self-consciousness, stable educational groups of students.*

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From the point of view of psychological analysis self-knowledge is a process and a product (Rubenstein, 2003; Stolin, 1983; Chesnokova, 1977). The greater attention of the researches is focused on the study of self-knowledge and self-attitude.

Self-knowledge is defined as complex long in time process the product of which is quite rigid images of Myself. According to I.I. Chesnokova

(Chesnokova, 1997) self-knowledge is the mechanism to study oneself leading from elementary self-feelings firstly organic, to self-perceptions, self-beliefs, viewpoints and notions about oneself. In this way I.I. Chesnokova describes development as a complex process individually long in time and divided into two basic levels. At the first level self-knowledge is fulfilled through different forms of correlation of

oneself with other people. At this level of self-knowledge isolated images of oneself and one self's behavior are combined as if they are tied to certain situation, certain communication, some relatively stable sides of notions of Myself are formed, but there is no yet a complete true understanding of oneself connected with the notion of self being. For the second level it is typically that self-correlation of knowledge about oneself is fulfilled not in the frames of "Myself and Another Person" but in the frames of "Myself – Myself" when a person operates with ready knowledge about himself, in some extent with former received in different times in different situations.

Thus, I.I. Chesnokova defines two levels of self-knowledge in self-consciousness. Meanwhile, self-consciousness according to known in psychology definition has three-level structure (James, 1991; Kon, 1978; Stolin, 1983). I.I. Chesnokova describes psychological peculiarities of images not only "social Myself" and "spiritual Myself" but also "Physical myself" it means, in fact she also emphasizes three levels of self-consciousness structure but she reviews self-knowledge only at social and personal levels of a person's activity. At the same time as it was mentioned above this author asserts that self-consciousness starts with the stage of elementary self-feelings at the beginning of organic ones. Such characteristic of self-consciousness is out of the frames defined by the author for this process.

It seems that besides two levels of self-consciousness (self-consciousness in the system of "Myself and Another one" and "Myself – Myself" i.e. in the system of correlation of oneself with others and in the system of correlation of oneself with oneself), developed by I.I. Chesnokova there is also elementary level of self-knowledge, at it a person learns himself at a physical level of activity. At this level self-knowledge is also in the system of correlation relations of oneself with

oneself, i.e. in the system of relations "subject – subject", and the tool of self-knowledge is elementary self-feeling. Domestic cultural and historical tradition in psychology and psychic study left aside of its researches the problem of the body. V.P. Zinchenko (Zinchenko, 1994) wrote that L.S. Vygotskiy was mainly busy with the problem of spiritual Myself. From the point of view of general psychology the extension of problem of consciousness and self-consciousness that is used by psychologists practitioners is interesting in the highest extent.

Tight unity of emotional experience and image of Myself was shown by Z. Freud emphasising the most important role of body like psychological object in development of ego-structure. More concrete the problem of Myself connection with the body was researched in the work of R.Lang (Lang, 1995), who divided people into "embodied" and "not embodied" depending on how they feel themselves "submerged" into their bodies and find themselves apart from their bodies in some extent. Thus and individual as a starting point has the feeling of his body as a base on which he can be a personality together with other people. Separating Myself from the body prevents from direct participating of not embodied Myself in any aspect of life in this world that is mediated only thanks to corporal perception, feelings and actions (means of expressiveness, gesticulations, words, actions and so on). Not embodied Myself becomes hyperconsciousness. It tries to postulate its own imago (in psychoanalysis imago is unconsciousness image of objects, in this very case it is unconsciousness images of a personal body). It develops relations with itself and the body that can become quite complex (Lang, 1995: 87-88). Following R. Lang and I.I. Nalchadzhan (Nalchadzhan, 1988) we consider that corporal image of Myself ("physical Myself") is the basis on which further development of Myself-concept takes place. According to this understanding of the

body scheme we cannot agree with V.V. Stolin's thought that body scheme and the way the person feels are not in the Myself structure because "they are integrated directly into the psychic system of the organism". Body scheme and the way the person feels (as emotional experience of actual perception of a personal body and its factual state) are not "analogues of Myself at the level of organism" (Stolin, 1983) but full-fledged "component cells" or substructure of Myself-concept (A.A. Nalchadzhian, 1988). The image of the body is relatively stable substructure of Myself-concept. Ungeneratedness of self-identity can play dramatically deforming role in a person's self-consciousness formation.

In the whole the analysis of the literature showed that self-knowledge is made at all three levels of self-consciousness and at the level of "social Myself" self-knowledge is made in the system of "Myself and Another one" but at the levels of "physical Myself" and "spiritual Myself" it is in the system of "Myself – Myself".

Many-step complex process of self-knowledge is necessarily joined with self-attitude. Being an aspect of self-organization, self-attitude as well as self-knowledge is fulfilled like a process and its product. In this research after I.I. Chesnokova we understand self-attitude like personal emotional experience and estimation of that a person learns, understands and "reveals" inside himself.

If in the course of self-knowledge study in the literature analysis it was quite easy to define its procedural characteristic and its product (image of Myself) then it occurred to be a difficult business for self-attitude. As S.R. Pantileev mentions (Pantileev, 1991) it is possible to separate out self-appraisal in self-description and even to isolate it from word self-description but it is extremely hard to separate knowledge out the estimation. Connection of self-knowledge and self-attitude in Myself-conception is so high that

in some researches (Schavelzon, R) self-attitude loses its theoretical status to be a special object of psychological analysis. In the given research we follow the point according to which the separation of the processes of self-knowledge and self-attitude has the great meaning for understanding of the content and the functions of self-attitude in self-consciousness. We review self-attitude like an aspect of self-consciousness that has its own content and functions. Having reconsidered existing in western literature basic notions about the structure of generalized self-attitude and connected to it problems, S.R. Pantileev (Pantileev, 1991) developed five basic approaches to understanding of global self-appraisal and its structure. In these approaches two positions that are taken into consideration by the researches can be separated out: firstly, there is some generalization of self-attitude (self-respect and self-appraisal) that are integral, one-dimensional and universal formations expressing the degree of positivity of individual's attitude to his own viewpoint of himself; secondly, this generalized self-attitude integrates somehow from private self-appraisals. Yet it is necessary to mention that in one of the approaches (in the fifth one) self-attitude is reviewed not like a product (self-appraisal) but like a process, i.e. like an emotional experience.

Following by K. Rogers (Rogers, 2000) in this research self-appraisal from the point of view of emotional experience is understood in the form of notions about oneself and self-attitude is understood like some universal and stable feeling of self-respect – like self-appraisal (Bern, 1986). The most distinctively this position is shown in K Rogers's works (Rogers, 2000), he separates out two aspects in self-appraisal: self-appraisal and emotional. Self-appraisal attitude leads to formation of self-appraisal of oneself like a bearer of certain features and merits; emotional attitude leads to self-acceptance in the

whole not depending on one's own features and merits or, on the contrary, to self-unacceptance. The mechanism of formation of these self-attitude sides is absolutely diverse. Self-appraisal according to any feature is more often based on comparison of self-progresses with progresses of other people. Self-acceptance is not only appraisal but also a general life guideline that is formed in the process of ontogenesis and also thanks to consciousness efforts.

A complex structural composition of self-attitude can become the basis for inner conflict when immediate emotional experience of oneself, liking for oneself, emotional acceptance of oneself, one's aspiration for self-realization do not coincide with self-appraisal. We find the statement that self-appraisal defends oneself actively with different authors (V.V. Stolin, 1983; K. Rogers, 2000). This is connected to the use of mechanisms of psychological defense by an individual that are necessary to overcome dissonance between his immediate emotional experience and appraisal of the image of Myself. Reacting on the state of this dissonance like a threat arising because of emotional experience contradicting Myself-conception and individual uses one of the two defense mechanisms – distortion or negation. The first one is used to change the personal importance of emotional experience, the second one somehow removes the fact of emotional experience itself. The source of arising in the result of it disadaptation is in potential conflict between guidelines, appraisal of personal Myself and appraisals coming from other people and interiorized by individual (Rogers, 2000; Chesnokova, 1977). At the same time there is data according to which mismatch of two components of self-attitude may lead to personal growth (Adler, 1997). All these indicate that self-attitude has a level structure. According to the notion that is being developed in this research, self-attitude is

fulfilled at physical and reflexive levels of self-consciousness.

First of all, we'll mention that in psychological literature this problem hasn't been worked out enough. The majority of researches are devoted to the problem of self-attitude development in ontogenesis both emotional experience of oneself and self-appraisal (Chesnokova, 1977). At the same time these works are important for our research as just they contain the analysis of self-attitude peculiarities at different levels of recognition – from vague and diffusive emotional reactions with indistinct appraisal of the motivation of one's own behavior, its results to clear and fully conscious emotional and appraisal attitude to one self-attitude self.

The analysis of the literature showed that self-attitude at physical level of self-consciousness is attitude to one's own body like a part of entire personality in the field of "organism – environment". Even so both emotional process and estimation of this process are presented in self-attitude. Mismatch of emotional (inner) experience and self-appraisal that is worked out according to adopted by the society norm may lead both to initiation of inner conflicts and to personal growth.

Self-attitude at the social level of self-consciousness is studied, firstly, in the frames of the problem of correlation of self-knowledge category and N.I. Sardzhveladze's self-attitude (Sardzhveladze, 1989), secondly supporting and defense of self-attitude by the personality (V.V. Stolin, 1983; A.A. Nalchadzhian, 1988). Even so self-attitude supports its stability often at the cost of exclusion of negative attitude to some concrete image of Myself. Then the personality negatively estimating some of his images of Myself can treat himself with liking in the whole simultaneously. At the same time such complex structure of self-attitude can become the basis for inner conflict then immediate emotional

experience of oneself, liking to oneself, emotional understanding of oneself and self-aspiration to self-realization make oneself known quite strongly but contradict self-appraisal that is formed to a great or less extent in correlation to socially developed norms and values. The inner conflict becomes stronger because of the fact that defense mechanisms do not allow creation of actual direction of self-attitude. This leads to strong emotional tension.

Self-attitude at the reflexive level of self-consciousness is researched mainly in humanistic and existential psychology (Perls, 1995; Rogers, 2000 and others). For example F. Perls supposes (Perls, 1995) that for understanding one's own problem an individual must go out of perception frames of its separate concrete details. Even so a person opens something new inside of himself and experiences himself in a new way. K Rogers writes (K. Rogers, 2000) that this can happen if one help the person express his feelings and emotionally colored impulses connected to his conflicts to give him possibility to free from emotions without any barriers. This is a gradual way of self-knowledge and self-acceptance when an individual can see interconnection between his personal *Myself* like he used to imagine and some not very worthy, less acceptable motives.

The simplest and accessible way to create such conditions is a personal training. For the last ten years the trainings of personal growth has been included into psychological faculties curriculum for the development of self-development. By the way how it influences on changes of future psychologist' self-knowledge and self-attitude in reality hasn't been studied. Until recently the trainings of personal growth at every year of education of future psychologists have been conducted in Krasnoyarsk State Pedagogical University named after V.P. Astafyev. We have

made the research of changes in self-knowledge and self-attitude of the students of stable groups during all years of their education.

In personal growth trainings future psychologists – students of stable student groups of the Pedagogical University, academic years I to V took part. Content part of the trainings was unchangeable: creation of conditions for development and dynamics of self-knowledge and self-attitude at all three levels of self-consciousness: physical *Myself*, social *Myself* and reflexive *Myself*. For researches of self-knowledge and self-attitude peculiarities the following methodics were used: self-reports; projective drawings of real *Myself* and ideal *Myself* images; test of "Twenty statements of self-attitude" (M Kuhn, T. McPartland) before and after each training for all the academic years. Thus changes of self-knowledge and self-attitude of every student in stable group have been recorded during all five years of University study. Study of stability and integrity of self-knowledge and self-attitude changes were made a year later the training with the use of the method of self-reports. Generalized analysis of the dynamics of students' self-consciousness in this longitude research was made by E.V. Cherepanova (Cherepanova, 2010). What concerns this article we analyzed only changes happened in self-knowledge and self-attitude of the students in stable groups.

The analysis of the research results showed the following peculiarities of self-knowledge and self-attitude of future psychologists.

In stable students groups in all the years self-knowledge dominates self-attitude meanwhile value of the indices of self-knowledge low from the year I to V. Changes of self-attitude of future psychologists are ambiguous: in junior years the growth of positive attitude to oneself (self-acceptance) is observed, in the fourth year between trainings negative self-attitude

dominates, in the fifth academic year attitude to oneself is positive again. Value of the indices of self-attitude between trainings sharply lows.

Irregularity of self-knowledge and self-attitude changes were revealed like structural components of self-consciousness: during of all years of education indices of self-knowledge and self-attitude at the level of social Myself of stable groups students exceed these indices at the levels of Physical Myself and reflexive Myself. In all the student groups all the components of self-consciousness find interlevel correlation, i.e. they correlate to each other inside each level of self-consciousness. However the physical level is in direct correlation to the reflexive one and in inverse correlation to the social level. It can be supposed that fixation on social images of Myself stipulates switching on the defense mechanisms and prevents from emotional experience of physical and reflexive Myself, i.e. blocking of the development of Physical Myself do not provide with basis for development of self-knowledge and self-attitude at the level of reflexive Myself. Domination of self-knowledge at the level of social Myself of the students limits their body expression as the result of focus on appraisal of own physical Myself to the prejudice of other people of self-attitude – emotional experience. In other words focus on other components supposes denial of one's dissimilarity, individuality and denial of oneself (E. Formm) through the adaptation to the norms and rules of mutual relations with them. Unlike the majority of students in this research there were some students who in the course of the training revealed themselves freely without the fear of other students' estimation and who found a rather high level of self-knowledge of physical myself and reflexive Myself. These students managed to advance in reflexive growth while participating in trainings and the period between the trainings, to rise at the higher level of development of self-consciousness and self-

attitude. The majority of the students' forming mechanism of reflection was still weak and in natural environment (stable group) some kinds of "supports" to help develop this ability are absent.

It should be mentioned that the students of stable groups communicate, cooperate not only during the trainings but during lectures and seminars when they can be in the situation of competitiveness and it means they appraise each other. The trainings of personal growth has a necessary effect of group unity. In the development of the stable group we see an arising effect when the training both makes conditions for self-revealing and improvement of relations inside the group and initiates fixation of social roles in the group, interpersonal relations, appraisals, certain group norms. Directed to the development of reflection in stable students groups such trainings in reality block this process and achieve a reverse result – fix socially built relations and lead to domination of students' social level of self-consciousness as far as their interpersonal relations are burdened by the fear of being unaccepted, negatively appraised by their group mates. Fixation on intergroup relations leads to the fact that the students and at the time of the trainings of personal growth are closed for new emotional experience, their processes of self-attitude are firstly oriented to self-appraisal connected to the group norms but not to real, emotional experience of themselves as entire personality. This is seen in domination of the processes of self-knowledge when the knowledge of oneself is selective, isn't saturated emotionally and undesirable images are forced out. Thus, disharmonious functioning of self-consciousness components is expressed not only in the fact that self-knowledge dominates to the prejudice of self-attitude but also in the fact that self-knowledge develops itself defectively because of undeveloped self-attitude.

Based on the results of the analysis of the research it can be asserted that the trainings of personal growth included into Psychological faculty curriculum as an obligatory subject in every academic year will have retarding influence on professional formation of students because they block the development of self-knowledge and self-attitude that are among the main conditions of professional growth of a psychologist.

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## **Самопознание и самоотношение студентов учебных групп в тренингах личностного роста**

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*В настоящей статье рассмотрены изменения самопознания и самоотношения студентов – будущих психологов с первого по пятый год их обучения. Тренинги личностного роста являются наиболее эффективным способом для развития этих процессов, поэтому такие тренинги часто включаются в учебные программы психологических факультетов. Исследование включало ежегодное изучение эффективности использования тренингов личностного роста для студентов – будущих психологов стабильных учебных групп. Самопознание и самоотношение студентов изучалось до и после проведения тренингов с помощью самоотчетов, теста 20 утверждений на самоотношение М. Куна, Т. Макпартленда и рисуночных проективных методик. В результате выяснилось, что значения параметров самопознания и самоотношения студентов стабильных учебных групп на социальном уровне были намного выше, чем значения этих параметров на уровне физического и рефлексивного уровней самосознания. В то же время физический уровень прямо пропорционально коррелирует с рефлексивным уровнем и обратно пропорционально коррелирует с социальным уровнем самосознания. Следовательно, фиксация на социальном образе Я «включает» защитные механизмы личности и препятствует переживанию Я физического и Я рефлексивного. Таким образом, тренинги личностного роста в стабильных учебных группах тормозят личностное и профессиональное развитие студентов, так как они блокируют рост их самопознания и самоотношения.*

*Ключевые слова: самопознание, самоотношение, тренинг личностного роста, физический, социальный и рефлексивный уровни самосознания, стабильная учебная группа студентов.*

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