

EMPATHY AND SYMPATHY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract:

The article is devoted to the problem of empathy of modern teenagers. Primary diagnostics of the level of empathy in the subjects showed that there is a part of adolescents in whom the ability to empathize is weakly expressed. Adolescents may have difficulty interacting with other people, in building close relationships. Experimental and control groups were formed, which included students with a low level of empathy in terms of the general indicator. The formation of empathy in younger adolescents was carried out in the course of the implementation of a specially designed program of developing activities. The results of statistical data processing procedures before and after the training program showed that there is a significant positive dynamics of empathy indicators in adolescents. It is shown that a specially designed program of classes aimed at the formation of empathy components helps to overcome the difficulties of adolescents in reflecting and understanding feelings, establishing trusting relationships in communication with peers

Keywords: empathy, development of empathy of adolescents, conditions for the formation of empathy.

ЭМПАТИЯ И СИМПАТИЯ И СОЦИАЛЬНОЕ РАЗВИТИЕ У ПОДРОСТКОВ

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Аннотация

Статья посвящена проблеме эмпатии современных подростков. Первичная диагностика уровня эмпатии у испытуемых показала, что существует часть подростков, у которых способность к эмпатии выражена слабо. У подростков могут возникать трудности во взаимодействии с другими людьми, в построении близких отношений. Были сформированы экспериментальная и контрольная группы, в которые вошли обучающиеся с низким уровнем эмпатии по общему показателю. Формирование эмпатии младших подростков осуществлялось в ходе реализации специально разработанной программы развивающих занятий. Результаты статистических процедур обработки данных до и после проведения программы занятий показали, что существует значимая положительная динамика показателей эмпатии у подростков. Показано, что специально разработанная программа занятий, направленных на формирование составляющих эмпатии, способствует преодолению затруднений подростков в



отражении и понимании чувств, установлении доверительных отношений в общении со сверстниками.

Ключевые слова: эмпатия, развитие эмпатии подростков, условия формирования эмпатии.

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technologies brings significant changes to human life. Social interaction is becoming more formalized and focused on the rational component. The number of situations conducive to trusting emotional communication is decreasing. Their lack affects the level of empathy of modern man, which begins to decline

Empathy takes on particular importance for younger adolescents. At this age, intimate and personal communication becomes the leading activity. Each teenager builds trusting relationships in his own way. One effortlessly conducts a dialogue, emotionally supports his interlocutor, creates a positive and friendly atmosphere in communication, makes new acquaintances and, in general, evokes sympathy among those around him. This is not possible for others, which is difficult for a teenager to experience. The reason for failure may be a low level of emotional responsiveness, the ability to understand the emotional state of the interlocutor, empathy and sympathy. In this regard, the question arises about psychological and pedagogical conditions that can contribute to the development of empathy in younger adolescents.

V.V.'s technique was used as a diagnostic tool. Boyko "Diagnostics of the level of empathy" [1]. The technique covers six components of empathy and makes it possible to clarify the development indicators of the subjects' rational, emotional and intuitive channels of empathy; attitudes that promote empathy; penetration and identification in empathy.

During the processing of the primary diagnostic data, indicators of symptom severity were determined for each of the six scales of the questionnaire, and the general level of empathy of younger adolescents was clarified in comparison with the normative data presented in the methodology. The distribution of subjects into groups according to the indicator of the general level of empathy showed the following:

There are some teenagers whose ability to empathize is poorly expressed, namely: the ability to understand their own and others' emotions, to experience and understand an emotional response, to adapt to the emotional state of another person and predict its change, to create positive attitudes and a favorable atmosphere in communication is not developed. Teenagers may have difficulty interacting with other people and building close relationships.

In order to achieve the goal of the study, based on the results of primary diagnostics and data analysis, experimental and control groups (N=12) were formed, which included students with a low level of empathy in terms of the general indicator. Group equivalence was checked using Student's t-test. The Student's t-test indicator (0.275, $p = 0.786$) confirmed the absence of statistically significant differences in the overall level of empathy of adolescents in the control and experimental groups and, thus, the equivalence of the control and experimental groups



The formation of empathy in younger adolescents was carried out during the implementation of a specially developed program of developmental classes. The objectives of the program were the following:

- 1) introduce adolescents to the components of the structure of empathy (rational, emotional and intuitive channels of empathy; attitudes that promote empathy; penetrating ability and identification in empathy);
- 2) develop the following skills in younger adolescents: determine the emotional state by facial expressions and gestures; feel an emotional response; use intuition during communication; develop attitudes that promote empathy; create an atmosphere in which the interlocutor begins to trust and open up; identify with the person to better understand his emotional state.

The object of developmental work was the empathy of younger adolescents, the subject was the ability to empathy, the ability to show it.

Taking into account the characteristics of this age category of participants determined the choice of certain forms of work: group work ensured the satisfaction of adolescents' needs for communication with peers; individual work made it possible to demonstrate a desire for independence; the conversation with the participation of the facilitator helped to satisfy the need to communicate with adults "on an equal footing"; reflection at the end of each lesson made it possible to realize the need for self-knowledge; games and exercises contributed to the desire to express oneself.

The following work methods were used: verbal (story, conversation), practical (exercises: "Facial expressions of emotions", "My emotional response", "What does he feel?", "Intuition is my friend", "Catch the attitude", "Changing attitudes").

The following techniques were used: updating knowledge; knowledge control, feedback; reflections. Updating knowledge involved clarifying the students' ideas as they answered questions (What is empathy? What are the basic emotions, negative and positive? Do you think negative emotions are good or bad? What does each emotion tell us? With the help of what signs in facial expressions , in behavior we can determine this or that emotion? What is an "emotional response"? What is "intuition"? What are "attitudes"? What actions contribute to creating an atmosphere of trust and openness? What is the essence of the techniques: "Parrot", "Did you feel...", "Do I understand you correctly?", "Pause"? What is identification? How can you identify with a person?). Knowledge was also updated during games ("Impulse", "Crocodile", "Catch the emotion", "Is something bothering me?", "Changing places", "Repeat", "Lemon and Cheese", "One pace"), "Who are you?", Know-It-All") and quizzes ("Empathy is part of me").

Knowledge control and feedback were expected within the framework of performing exercises and participating in games ("They are friends", "My story", "Facial expressions", "Find a pair", "My emotional response", "What do I feel?", "Guess my emotional state", "What does he feel?", "The language of intuition", "Intuition is my friend", "Do I sense success or failure?", "Catch the attitude", "Changing attitudes", "How do we listen?", "Man like an open book", "Mirror", "Role reversal", "The ability to empathize is in my hands").



Reflection involved evaluating one's work in class, highlighting information that was more meaningful to oneself, and answering the questions: What did I like in the lesson? What can I teach my friend now? Why does he need this? Classes were held three times a week (Monday, Wednesday, Friday). The duration of each of them was 40 minutes. Classes required blackboard and chalk

Three stages of program implementation were identified: introductory, main and final. The introductory stage included establishing emotional contact with schoolchildren, uniting them and familiarizing them with the rules of work, playing games ("Associations", "High Five", "Hugs") and reflection (the "Sun" ritual). The main stage involved informing schoolchildren about the components of empathy (rational, emotional, intuitive channels of empathy; attitudes that promote empathy; penetrating ability and identification in empathy). Also at this stage, games and exercises were carried out aimed at developing the components of empathy. At the final stage, the following were carried out: a generalizing game "Know-It-All", an exercise "The ability to empathize is in my hands", a quiz "Empathy is a part of me", a final reflection (the "Sun" ritual). This stage was the stage of summing up the results of the lessons.

The following adolescent skills were expected as a result of the program:

- identify and verbalize emotions;
- feel and verbalize the emotional response that arose in relation to a person or his products of activity;
- use intuition to interact more effectively with another person;
- become aware of and change attitudes that impede empathy;
- create an atmosphere in which the interlocutor begins to trust and open up.

Indicators of program effectiveness were determined for each component of the empathy structure according to V.V. Boyko (rational, emotional and intuitive channels of empathy; attitudes that promote empathy; penetrating ability and identification in empathy).

In particular, the development of a rational channel of empathy was confirmed by the following:

- independent development of cards of emotions (sadness, joy, anger, fear, interest, disgust);
- the ability to verbalize emotions based on the analysis of facial expressions, postures, gestures, voice, rate of speech, and distance of a person.

Indicators of the development of the emotional channel of empathy were:

- the ability to have an emotional response and its description (the emotion that is experienced) regarding creative products (musical works, paintings, stories, etc.) and the person who manifests himself in them.

The development of the intuitive channel of empathy was noted as follows:

- an image of intuition is formed and reflected in the drawing;
- a metaphorical description of intuition has been compiled: What is its name? How does she look? Where does he live? How does he interact with you? How do you interact with her?
- actions were performed using intuition (choosing a card with eyes closed: imagining the image of the desired card and feeling complete calm in the body);
- the results of the development of the situation (success or failure) are determined depending on the chosen behavior.



Indicators of the development of attitudes that promote empathy are the following:

– attitudes that hinder empathy were recorded and voiced. They have been refuted (using a list of examples from my own life). Attitudes that promote empathy are recorded.

The development of penetrating ability in empathy was noted as follows:

– developing the ability to maintain stable visual contact and convey a positive attitude to a partner through facial expression (smile);

– body control: slight lean forward towards the interlocutor; open posture (legs are not crossed, both feet stand freely on the floor; the toes of the feet are directed towards the interlocutor; the back is straight, but not tense; the hands rest loosely on the hips; the hands are not clasped; the palms are visible to the interlocutor);

– understanding the distance that is most comfortable for the interlocutor (intimate, personal, social and public zones);

– knowledge of the “sitting next to” position, intermediate position, and “sitting opposite” position; the ability to take the same position as the interlocutor: sitting or standing;

– voice control: the voice is soft, not loud, moderate in tempo;

– use of the techniques “Parrot” (repeating the last words of the speaker), “Did you feel...” (assuming the emotion that the interlocutor feels), “Do I understand you correctly?” (summarizing and retelling a person’s story) and “Pause” (holding a pause).

The development of the ability to identify in empathy was noted:

– exact copying of the interlocutor’s gestures, postures, and voices;

– verbalization of his alleged experiences.

On the “Attitudes Promoting Empathy” scale, the significance level is more than 0.05, but less than 0.1. This indicates the presence of a statistical trend confirming the significance of changes in the indicator of the severity of the trait. There are differences on the Empathy Index scale at the 0.001 significance level. The data obtained allow us to confirm the significance of the increase in empathy indicators. We can say that schoolchildren from the experimental group began to show greater interest in the other person, paying attention to the analysis of his emotional state, attitude to the interaction situation, and his experiences. Also, in the face of a lack of objective information about people, relying on unconscious experience, adolescents began to more often use intuition to anticipate the emotional reactions and behavior of other people. Students developed the ability to understand others based on empathy and putting themselves in their partner’s place. The ability to empathize, sympathize with others, and be emotionally responsive has developed. There is a change in the attitudes of adolescents, the emergence of those that promote empathy, increase the range of emotional responsiveness and empathic perception. The final indicator of the overall level of empathy of adolescents from the experimental group indicates positive dynamics in the development of the ability to reflect and understand the emotional state of another person, which affects the effectiveness of interaction with him. To confirm the effectiveness of specially organized conditions for the formation of empathy, the equivalence of the experimental and control groups in terms of the general level of empathy of adolescents was checked. The value of Student's t-test for



independent samples (4.234 at $p = 0.001$) confirmed statistically significant differences, that is, the absence of equivalence between groups.

Conclusion

The results of statistical procedures suggest that a specially designed program is an effective condition for the formation of empathy in younger adolescents. After the implementation of the training program, there was a significant positive trend in empathy indicators in adolescents. The focus of classes on developing the ability to understand one's own and others' emotions, to experience and understand an emotional response, to adapt to a person's emotional state and predict its changes, to create positive attitudes and a favorable atmosphere in communication, contributes to the development of empathy in the totality of its components. The results of the study can be taken into account by school psychological service specialists when organizing work with students who have difficulty establishing trusting relationships with peers.

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