

I. COMMON PROBLEMS OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN THE PAST AND THE PRESENT



DIFFERENTIATION OF EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL IN UKRAINE DURING THE PERIOD OF DEMOCRATIC CHANGE IN EDUCATIONAL INDUSTRY (mid 80's – early 90's of XX century)

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Summary. The article highlights the peculiarities of differentiation of education in primary school in Ukraine in the mid 80's – early 90's of XX century. It displays such forms of differentiation as external (realized through the functioning of various types of educational establishments to obtain basic education and organize different types of classes in the structure of general school depending on the readiness of children to school and their mental development) and internal (realized at class level); they were actual during the outlined period in line with the democratic changes in education at the national level.

Keywords: differentiation of education; external differentiation; internal differentiation; primary school; Ukraine.

The dynamism of modern social transformations in Ukraine is accompanied by reformation of the educational industry, in particular primary education as a basic educational level that is oriented on the formation of general and social competencies that are necessary for further successful education and personal self-realization. One of the priority vectors of this process is the differentiation of education; provision of primary school children by individual educational trajectories considering their personal necessities, interests and abilities; the National strategy of development of education in Ukraine to 2021 accentuates on this [4]. In this connection it would be logical to apply to the national historical and pedagogical experience including the period of the mid 80's – early 90's of XX century. The problem of differentiation of education actualized in this period in line with the democratic changes in education; category "differentiation of education" began to be widely used in normatively-legal documents, was spread in the educational space; searching, experimentation and implementation of new forms and levels of differentiation of primary school activated.

Let us note that the term of "differentiation of education" we consider as "the way of the educational process in which individual typological features of personality were taken into account (abilities, inclinations, interests, peculiarities

of intellectual activity, etc.)" [5, p. 11]. Let us stress that the differentiation of education has various forms of manifestations, namely: *external* (it is realized at the level of general educational system through the creation of differentiated schools or school through the creation of differentiated classes) and *internal* (it is realized at the level of the class and generally provides selection of groups of school children by certain characteristics in heterogeneous composition of class (on the general level, level of special abilities, interests, etc.) [5, p. 170]. Let us identify and describe the features of differentiation of education in primary school in Ukraine in the mid 80's – early 90's of XX century that are based on the outlined theoretical approaches.

The study and analysis of legislative and normative documents (the Law of the USSR "On assertion of the bases of legislation of the USSR and Union Republics about Public Education" (1973), the Law of the Ukrainian SSR "On Education" (1991), the Resolution of Council of Ministers of the USSR "On general boarding schools, orphanages and other boarding establishments" (1984), Regulations on schools (classes) with intensive theoretical and practical study of the subjects (1986) etc.), the annual analytical reports of the Ministry of Education of the Ukrainian SSR (1984–1991) grounds to assert that the primary education was given in different types of schools in the investigated period. They can be differentiated by the following criteria: *the structure* (the primary (I–III (IV) classes), incomplete middle (I–VIII (IX) classes) and middle (I–X (XI) classes) schools); *the duration of education* (three-year (I–III classes) and a four-year (I–IV classes) primary education); *the geographical location* (urban and rural schools); *the language of learning* (schools and classes in Ukrainian, Russian, Moldovan, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian and Crimean Tatar languages of study); *the social providing* (schools, classes and groups of extended day, general boarding schools, special schools for difficult children and juvenile delinquent); *the psychophysical state of school children* (general sanatory-forest schools, sanatorium boarding schools, special secondary schools and boarding schools (for the mentally retarded, blind, visually impaired, deaf, hard of hearing children, for children with consequences of polio and cerebral palsy, with severe speech disorders, with mental retardation), leveling classes for children with mental retardation); *the conceptual basis* (mass school and authorial schools); *ability of students* (school (classes) and boarding schools with intensive study of subjects including foreign languages, music or art).

As we can see, the state educational policy directed on providing of *external differentiation of primary education*. This allowed creating conditions for its receipt of different categories of children (physically and mentally healthy children, orphans, children from poor families, children whose parents were not able to provide care for them during the day, children with minor disabilities in the health, children with defects in development, children who had special abilities). Without stopping on the dynamics of development of the outlined school types' network let us concentrate on increase of schools and classes as positive changes

in the investigated period. In comparison with the 70th of XX century their number had increased more than twice and at the beginning of 1991/1992 school year was over 6 thousand [9, p. 15]. Expanding of the network of schools and classes allowed creating of conditions for the development of special abilities and inclinations primary school children from the first years of education.

Perceptible changes in language policy which took place in the late 80's of XX century contributed to the increase of schools and classes with Ukrainian language of study, restoration of schools and classes for ethnic minorities, in particular Polish, Romanian, Crimean Tatars and others. Therefore, a significant number of primary school children got the opportunity to receive education in their native language. Among the positive tendencies let us mention the increase of schools whose activities were based on ideas of child-centered approach; it distinguished by the introduction of innovation in content, forms, methods and facilities of study and education of school children. Their functioning was possible due to the democratization and deunification of school education. According to archival materials in 1990 more than 300 schools worked after individual and experimental plans [8, p. 15].

The differentiation of primary schools by the duration of study was innovation of the investigated period. According to the resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Council of Ministers of the USSR "On further improvement of secondary education for young people and improving of conditions of comprehensive school" (1984) primary education was gradually transformed from three-year to four-year due to the decline of age limit of beginning of school study to six years [6, p. 35]. However due to a number of reasons (absence of the necessary learning environments, high material costs, unprepared teachers, etc.) the task was not performed. Therefore from 1986 to 2000 two types of primary schools functioned simultaneously in Ukraine – three-year and four-year. We think that in such situation parents and children had a real possibility to choose the age of entry to school and duration of getting primary education.

Let us note that there was the question of *external innerschool* or *class-by-class differentiation* in primary education in the late 80's of XX century. The researchers of laboratory of school psychodiagnostics Research Institute of psychology in Ukrainian SSR played an important role in this. Thus, the psychopedagogical system of differentiated education was developed under the direction of renowned scientist, head of this Laboratory Yu. Z. Hilbuha; it envisaged the creation of three types of classes in general school from the first year of study:

- *classes of age norms* were organized for teaching children whose mental development was consistent with their passport age (about 65 % of the total contingent of first-graders); their studying programs carried out by the current four-year schools for the six-year school children and three-year - for the seven-year school children;

- *accelerated classes of study* were created for children with high (rapid) level of mental development (about 15% of the total contingent of first-

graders); their study was carried out by compacted programs (educational material was given in large blocks, its concentricity was liquidated, etc.) that reduced the duration of primary education from four-year to three and from three-year to two; special attention was paid to the further intensive development of mental abilities of school children; the usage of such forms and methods as role training, group discussions, problem and creative tasks, contests, quizzes, etc. contributed to this);

- *classes of increased individual attention or leveling classes* were organized for teaching children who were poorly prepared for education at school, neglected children and children who had minor disabilities in mental development (about 20 % of all first-graders); their study took place after the ordinary programs, but the class was less filled (16–18 school children).

Admission of children to a particular class depended on the degree of their psychological readiness for school study and level of mental abilities. It is important that the boundaries of these classes were relative i.e. school children could be transferred from one type of class into another type depending on academic excellence [1, p. 12–14].

Experimental verification of the suggested system of class-by-class differentiation started in ten secondary schools of Ukraine from 1988. The first results of the research showed the effectiveness of differentiated classes. Thus, the level of success in most cases met grade "4" and "5". First of all, the children who entered schools without sufficient psychological readiness successfully eliminated the existing gaps in their development in classes with increased individualization. Secondly, the absence of unprepared children in classes of age norms allowed teacher to be successful in teaching children with normal mental development. Thirdly, school children with a high level of mental development who were in accelerated class received the necessary space for developing their abilities. Consequently, a high motivation in study was observed in primary school children. Their mental and moral development was quite harmonious. School children were distinguished by cheerfulness, communicability; in fact they were in more favorable psychological conditions than in mixed or heterogeneous classes. [1, p. 19–22].

However, at an initial stage of the research a conclusion on the unreasonableness of joint study in classes of increased individual attention by educationally neglected pupils and school children with mental retardation on organic basis was made; the last category of junior school children needed to slow the pace of mastering curriculum (instead of four years – five and instead of three – four) and reduce the filling of class to 12 school children. Therefore, from 1991 classes for children with mental retardation began to open in schools where class-by-class differentiation was implemented [1, p. 22].

The analysis of sources showed that the suggested class-by-class differentiation in primary education gained support among the pedagogical community.

The fact that in the early 90's of XX century it was included in more than 2 thousand schools in Ukraine and the former Soviet Union testifies about this [1, p. 19].

The Basic directions of reform of general and professional school (1984) and later the Concept of general school of Ukraine (1991) emphasized on the democratic changes in education, greater of attention to the development of abilities, aptitudes, interests of school children in the educational process; it led to an intense rise of interests of teachers to *innerclass differentiation* in primary school. The mentioned problem was theoretically grounded by the Ukrainian didactics (H. Kobernyk V. Lozova, V. Onyshchuk, O. Savchenko, etc.), popularized and at the same time discussed on the pages of pedagogical press. The creatively working teachers of primary schools implemented a differentiated approach in practical plane; results of their works distributed among other teachers. Thus, the primary school teacher of Kirovohrad region S. O. Lohachevska has developed and implemented an original system of forms and methods of differentiation of educational activity of junior school children in heterogeneous classes. Among the important conditions that contributed to the efficiency of innerclass differentiation the teacher provided the following:

- the differentiated approach carried out systematically, almost on every lesson; it was devoid of any formalism, i.e. context of the tasks depends on the theme of the lesson, didactic aims, lesson's stages and even psychological state of school children;
- differentiation is conducted within the frontal work of the class when school children solve common educational objectives; for each group of school children the content and scope of tasks were determined; it allowed them to absorb the course material for the same period of time;
- school children were conventionally combined in dynamic, temporary groups (the same school child might be in different groups during the mastering different subjects) due to what atmosphere in the classroom and mutual cooperation was created [2, p. 33].

Considering these conditions S. O. Lohachevska suggested to use two types of differentiated tasks: after the degree of difficulty (tasks that required different depth of summaries and conclusions; tasks designed for different levels of theoretical substantiation of work that is performed; tasks of reproductive and creative nature) and after the degree of independence of implementation (tasks of equal complication were offered; measure of teacher's help for different groups of school children was differentiated). The suggested system effectively allowed implementation of the differentiated approach in education of junior school children not only in classrooms of S. O. Lohachevska but in practice of her many followers [7, p. 31].

Let us pay attention that despite of the popularization of the issue of innerclass differentiation it was not widely used by teachers in practice. In the educational process that has become traditional primary school teachers focused on

"average student". The differentiated approach of study was often examined in increasing or reducing of the amount of tasks for school children [3, p. 20].

Thus, the state educational policy in the mid 80's – early 90's of XX century in line with the democratic changes aimed on ensuring of differentiation in primary education. The main forms of differentiation in the outlined period were external (at innerclass and innerschool levels) and internal (at class level); it made possible consideration of abilities, aptitudes, interests of junior school children, their intellectual, physical and mental development, national characteristics in the educational process. Approaches to the differentiation of primary school that were grounded in this period were further developed in the 90's of XX century when there was active revival of Ukrainian national school; the child-centered approach became the quintessential of the educational process and differentiated approach - obligatory principle of functioning of the school.

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