The Development of the Child's Personality as the Core Issue of Vasyl Sukhomlynsky's Creative Work

Oleksandra Savchenko

The article provides a comprehensive analysis of the holistic pedagogical system of comprehensive development of the student's personality, which was developed in the writings of V. Sukhomlynsky and tested in practice in the experience of Pavlyska School.
The analysis of the components of this system is presented, it includes goals and values of the educational process, comprehensive study of the inner world of the child, creation of motivation for development, modernization of the content of education, creation of educational and developmental environment in the school, evaluation of the results of teachers' work.
The importance of working with problematic *children is analyzed and recommendations for teachers are given. The special conditions of a humane approach to the organization of the initial-educational process are defined. V. Sukhomlynsky's approaches to the development of the younger student's personality correspond to the modern theoretical and practical research for the modernization of the modern education system.*

Keywords: *holistic pedagogical system, motivation of development and self-development of the child, modernization of educational content, creation of unique pedagogical environment.*

Introduction

The unique system of the student's personality development was created in Vasyl Sukhomlynsky's creative works, as well as in the pedagogical experience of Pavlyska School which was carried out under his organizational and scientific supervision. It covers all age groups, substantively and methodically combines lessons and extracurricular activities, different types of environment, involves the efforts of each child, teacher and parent.

Let us briefly outline the main components of this system.

First of all, these are the goals and values of the educational process. According to V. Sukhomlynsky, the center of a school life is the child's personality as the main goal and value of the educational process. Therefore, the goal, the true purpose of each school and its teaching staff is to create the best conditions for the comprehensive development of the student's personality, its moral, intellectual, labor, aesthetic components. This idea is reflected in many works of the prominent scholar, i.e. «To Children I Give My Heart», «Spiritual World of a Schoolchild», «One Hundred Pieces of Advice for Teachers», «Pavlysh Secondary School», «Issues of Comprehensively Developed Personality Education», «Conversation with a Young Principal», as well as in his literary work. The following terms are widely used in the works of V. Sukhomlynsky: comprehensive development, development of thinking, development of feelings, speech development, intellectual development, cultural development, physical development, development of educational activities, development of needs and interests, development of learning motives, development of the hard-working nature, development of the desires culture etc.

In those years when in theory, as well as in practice, knowledge, skills and abilities were considered to be as the main result of training, V. Sukhomlynsky in his book «Problems of Education of a Comprehensively Developed Personality» convinces readers that «full-fledged education develops mental strengths and abilities, would be inconceivable without a special orientation of training which is to develop the mind, educate a smart person even with the relative independence of mental development, the creative powers of the mind out of the volume of knowledge» (Sukhomlynsky, 1976, p. 97).

While analyzing the state of school education, the scientist came to the conclusion that it reached the goal only if a bright thought, living word and creativity of the child reigned at school. The entire content of the training should be based on these three main principles: the nature of the spiritual life of the school, its style, the atmosphere of relationships. Such an understanding of the purpose of school education in those years was innovative and very brave.

To achieve the goal of the comprehensive development of students V. Sukhomlynsky created an integrated pedagogical system. It embodied the productive ideas of his predecessors and his own ideas, which matured in the process of organic interconnection of theoretical and practical developments in the environment of Pavlysh secondary school.

The scientific foundations of this system, in our understanding, are as following:

- a comprehensive, deeply thought-out study of a child's personality in

various activities, in the combination of classroom and extracurricular activities;

- the orientation of the teaching staff's activities of the on the personal development and self-development of the child as a complex system that changes under the influence of many factors;

- the organization of various types of active, personally significant educational work for children (collective and individual) in the classroom and in extracurricular activities;

- the enrichment of educational activities with bright positive emotions and feelings of beauty;

- the real humanism of all types of communication and cooperation in pedagogical and student groups, its focus on affirming the dignity of each child as a member of a family, class collective, school and society;

- the use of labor and nature as a source of personal development of each child;

- a program of relevant and prospective tasks of creating an educational and developmental environment in the school with the efforts of children, teachers and parents;

- targeted motivation of students to achieve the maximum level of development of their spiritual and cognitive abilities;

- the priority of moral and developmental functions while assessing each child's learning results.

The psychological foundation of the developing system is a deep, comprehensive, friendly and continuous study of the child's inner world, his or her abilities, character, will, health, relationships with his or her family, homeland, nature, friends, books, his or her dreams, needs and feelings.

While rereading the books by V. Sukhomlynsky, we are convinced that the success of his pedagogical system is conditioned due to reliable knowledge, understanding of the world of childhood, attention, love for every child, regardless of his learning success.

He describes hundreds of children's images, characters, life situations that specifically show how to study a child's personality, how to take into account the complexity of his or her development in a long life path, from a 6-year-old to a boy or a girl.

In the book «One Hundred Tips for the Teacher», one of the articles is called «Remember that there is no and cannot be an abstract student». There the author convinces his readers that there cannot be an abstract student to whom all the laws of training and education could be applied mechanically. There are no common prerequisites for academic success for all schoolchildren. And the very concept of academic success is a relative thing, for one student the success means to have the «five», and for other the

«three» is a great achievement.

Any program in any subject is a certain level, circle of knowledge, but not a live child. One child, being in the 1st grade, can read the sum and solve it independently, while the other can do it at the end of the second grate, or even the third year of studying. And this means that in studying there should be individualization both in «mental work and in time» (Sukhomlynsky, 1976, p. 437).

In the article «The Man is on Our Conscience» we find extremely important reflections of the teacher how to investigate a child. «This question was very significant for me for a long period of time: how to learn the child, how to study his or her peculiarities, how to observe their personality. Our life convinced that to study the child, to know the individual features of their psyche, to penetrate into spiritual, it means to see the interaction of the child with the outside world, with things and phenomena, with people, with the forces of nature. At the desk, the child is not revealed to you: here you see only the result of her mental development and work …»

In any case, education should not begin at the desk ... Let the child return as often as possible to his native elements, because it is necessary for them, as the air to birds, as pure water to fish. That's why our teachers' staff came to the ideas of «The School Under the Blue Sky» (Sukhomlynsky, 1977, p. 203-217).

Studying the personality of the child, V. Sukhomlynsky recommended to start with a study of his health state, the family atmosphere and the environment in which he or she lives. In almost every scientist's work, we find his thoughts on how to focus the activities of the director and teachers on worries about children's health: «If you measure all my worries and worries about children during the first 4 years of education, then a good half of them are about health» (Sukhomlynsky, 1977, p. 103).

Let us recall some titles of his articles that confirm this idea: «Nature is the Source of Health», «We Live in the Garden of Health«; the book «Problems of a Comprehensively Developed Personality» is completed by the paragraph «Care for the Health of the Young Generation, Physical Education». Health is a saving direction in the development of the children personality, aimed at maintaining health, the teacher considers in conjunction with their educational achievements, their attitude to the world. So, V. Sukhomlynsky notes: «A child is a living creature, his brain is a very small one, a very tender organ, which must be treated with care and caution. The fullness of mental labor is determined not only and not simply by its pace and tension, but, first of all, by its correct, thought out, rational organization» (Sukhomlynsky, 1976, p. 193).

The experience of Pavlysh school in creating health-saving hygiene of academic work is still little studied and poorly used in the modern school, in which the results of children's work are often not comparable with the amount of mental and emotional efforts of the child. From the standpoint of humane pedagogy, the position of child centrism, the results of students' knowledge, changes in their development, the state of emotional and physical well-being of pupils should be integrated in determining the quality of education.

The motivation for the development and self-development of each child is the most important component of the pedagogical system created by V. Sukhomlynsky. The basis of such motivation is the repeated experiencing by each child of a sense of success in personal achievement in school, in labor tasks, in social assignments and in creative affairs.

This was facilitated by the original, emotionally exciting forms of organizing the school life. V. Sukhomlynsky managed to realize the dream of Y Komenskyi, the founder of scientific didactics, that the school should be a «workshop of humanity.» This idea was realized for students of different ages. So, for younger students. «School of Joy», «School under a Blue Sky», «Fairytale Room», «Dream Corner», «Music Box», «Travel to the Sources of Word and Thought» were created in the early 60s of the XX century.

A unique pedagogical environment was created in Pavlysh school through the efforts of teachers, students, parents and the village community: the school town which has a natural, industrial, and social environment. In addition, this real space was gradually expanded enriched and supplemented by imaginary travels of children around the country, foreign countries, and the globe. A constant and indispensable source of intellectual and spiritual enrichment of children was the book – one of the cults of life of Pavlysh school. V. Sukhomlynsky writes about the role of independent reading very often and specifically taking into account the leading needs and opportunities of children of every age. A «Room of Thought» was created for teenagers, in which several hundred of the smartest and best books were collected.

«How to encourage those children to reading?» V. Sukhomlynsky advised: «Before a teenager finds a book, the reading of which will become a whole stage, as a turning point in his life, everyone should be talked separately. This is not an easy task. In the teaching staff one often has to overcome indifference and inactivity. You can't just wait for a teenager to meet «his» or «her» book, you should try to reveal its true beauty – only after that this meeting will take place» (Sukhomlynsky, 1977, p. 235-236).

Let us remind you that there were special self-reading programs for elementary, primary and higher schools; the society of friends of books,

which included both children and adults and some hobby groups in Pavlysh school.

The pedagogical environment of Pavlysh school covered a complex of various components: educational, natural, social, artistic, game, economic, technological and informational ones. All that created the organizational, material and technical conditions for the comprehensive education as well as the development of pupils in different types of active labor (educational, economic, literary, social, etc.), meaningful leisure, creativity, and the identification of a benevolent and caring attitude towards others. «The upbringing of a comprehensively developed personality is not a series of invented general measures ... It is a pedagogical guide to its *various relations with the natural and social environment,* which depends on a variety of conditions, a large number of phenomena that a child sees and comprehends … We firmly believe that one: of the greatest troubles of school education is the mismatch of conditions with the efforts that are created for proper education» (Sukhomlynsky, 1976, p. 71).

The child's relationship with the environment should awaken his intellectual and creative initiative, stimulate humanity and ethics of relationships. Revealing to children the sources of joy and beauty in everyday affairs is an endless source of learning without coercion.

V. Sukhomlynsky considered the development of their thinking to be the most important component of the comprehensive development of schoolchildren. There were two training programs at Pavlysh school. The first program included educational material required for memorization, the second one – extra-curricular reading, hobby groups, environment observations, independent experiments, as well as other sources of getting information and strengthening motivation for development and self-development.

In his work «Education is a Part of Spiritual Life» V. Sukhomlynsky suggests combining the emotional awakening of the first grade pupils' minds (Sukhomlynsky, 1977, p. 125) with the ability to learn «as an instrument that generates the dignity of a hard-working thinker» (Sukhomlynsky, 1977, p. 603).

A central part of this process is the formation of students' learning skills that allow them to consciously determine the purpose of the work, think through and organize it, choose the necessary tools such as analysis, comparison, observation, cause and effect relationships and the like. V. Sukhomlynsky wrote: «A man has always been and will remain a child of nature, and that which makes him be close to nature should be used to familiarize him with the richness of spiritual culture. The world, surrounding a child, is, first of all, the world of nature with an unlimited wealth of phenomena, with inexhaustible beauty. It is here, in nature, where the eternal

source of children's mind is. But at the same time, year by year, the role of those environmental elements that are connected with the social relations of people and labor is increasing» (Sukhomlynsky, 1977, p. 17).

However, V Sukhomlynsky warned that «one cannot exaggerate the role of nature in mental education. Nature becomes a powerful source of upbringing only when a person cognizes it, penetrates with thought into causal relationships. Overestimating the role of visualization is the absolutization of certain features of children's thinking, the reduction of cognitive activity to feelings» (Sukhomlynsky, 1977, p. 129).

It is necessary to rely on the specific imaginative thinking of students so that it contributes to the development of theoretical knowledge. How to analyze this dependence V. Sukhomlynsky reveals in his «Book of Nature» It was based on 300 observations, 300 vivid pictures that had been imprinted in the minds of children when together with the teacher they went to nature – to learn to think. «These were, in fact, lessons of thinking. Not exciting walks, namely lessons. But the fact that the lesson can be very exciting, very interesting – this circumstance enriches the spiritual world of children even more» (Sukhomlynsky, 1977, p. 129).

The development of thinking is closely connected with *the development of speech skills, the ability to ask, to see a problem*. This relationship in the works of V. Sukhomlynsky can be traced in the system of independent tasks for students of each class for the construction of various texts, the performance of literary and visual tasks. V. Sukhomlynsky, together with his pupils of primary school, created more than 1,500 fairy tales, artistic and educational stories, essays, and sketches. Their contents have been published in many languages of the world. Ukrainian children read these works in collections of «Blue Cranes», «Clean Well», «Eternal Poplar», «Fireman Horse» and many others. These books remain the healing source of spiritual and speech development for pupils in the XXIst century.

We are proud to have a number of V. Sukhomlynsky's works for the 4-year school in the new Ukrainian textbooks «Ukraine and I» as an excellent material for the comprehensive development of schoolchildren.

Modernization of the content of primary education in the context of V. Sukhomlynsky's views. The magnitude and dynamism of changes in the content of modern school education are conditioned not only by the pace of social and technological development of the 21st century society, but also by the poor predictability of the living conditions to which the younger generation should be prepared. The necessity of the society for development, personally oriented education, education of competent and responsible person, capable of self-education and self-development, is able to think critically and creatively, work with information, strive to change for

the better life and the life of the country. Due to these circumstances, it is extremely difficult to analyze the problem of selection and didactic support of young generation in the school content of the core, the most valuable and indispensable for the education and development of a person invariant component, which must be consistent with the mandatory of the education result.

How difficult is to do so that can be seen by analyzing the heated discussions around the problems of standardizing content and the requirements for student achievement in the new state standard and typical elementary school programs. Let us turn to the experience of V. Sukhomlynsky, who covered the problem of constructing the content of school education comprehensively: methodologically, didactically and regarding it from the position of the Head of school. In the knowledge of the fundamentals of the sciences, it should be seen as dual purpose.

Firstly, every object and all objects in general are necessary for every pupil as a condition of their harmonious development; secondly, this or that subject is necessary for a particular student as a source of development of his individual inclinations, abilities, vocation formation, vocational orientation. Both of these appointments must, of course, be considered in close relation. But the scientists still believe, that the first assignment in a comprehensive school is a leading one. Deeply revealing the contribution of each subject to the general education of students, they argued that only their combination forms in the complex of the culture thinking, speech, and educates a cultural person.

According V. Sukhomlynsky, «True education concludes the harmony of knowledge which provides the optimum level of general mental development of a person, and this overall development ... contributes to the constant growth ability to acquire new knowledge» (Savchenko, 2011, p. 97).

It is important to be aware of the competence approach of the relationship between knowledge and skills. V. Sukhomlynsky also paid attention to this peculiarity. In particular, the scientist considered the most important problem of school achievement of harmony of knowledge and skills in student. It is important to be aware of the competency approach the relationship between knowledge and skills. V. Sukhomlynsky also paid attention to this peculiarity. In particular, the scientist considered the most important problem of school achievement of harmony of knowledge and skills of students. «Pupils can be successfully learned only when» he wrote, «when they are able to observe, think, express thoughts, read, write, think reading, and read thinking. This complex of basic skills is the whole branch of the pedagogical process» (Sukhomlynsky, 1977, p. 99).

The most important component of an educated person

V. Sukhomlynsky considered the ability of read thoughtfully, and sources of creative thought – «nature, work, moral beauty of human behavior, book and creativity ...» (Sukhomlynsky, 1977, p. 477). He argued that without a high reading culture, there is neither school nor real mental work. «Poor reading is a dirty window, through which nothing is visible» (Archival materials in the V. Sukhomlynsky's Museum in Pavlysk «The Role of Reading in the Mental Upbringing of Schoolchildren. A Report at a Psychological Seminar» – Part III, I970). These provisions are directly correlated with the requirements. Which are laid down in the Law of Ukraine «On Education» and the State Standard on the formation of basic end-to-end skills, in particular, reading comprehension, ability to express their opinions, think critically and systematically.

The teacher has repeatedly written that children should show their personality in a work that should be moral and social directed, varied in duration and at the end of result; to combine efforts of mind and hands, to be strong and motivated. The scientist emphasized the neccessity to reach hands. There are many bilateral connections between the hand and the brain – «the development of the baby at the tips of her fingers«.

Unfortunately, we are now regarding the tendency to reduce such work in elementary school, although psycho-physiologists have long proven of the multifunctional positive impact of drawing, sculpting, expression on the development of sensory (visual, tactile) and intellectual processes.

In the development of a child's personality, *the process of evaluating the results of his work is extremely important. Evaluation can raise a child, or it can suppress, inhibit development, generate a negative attitude towards the world.*

V. Sukhomlynsky believed that the system of control and assessment of knowledge at that time was very imperfect. He expressed dismay about a teacher who estimated children's mental abilities only on the basis of school grades: good marks signified that a pupil was good. «The grades that a pupil receives are given moral meaning; the teacher often draws conclusions about the moral character of the child based on assessments» (Sukhomlynsky, 1976, p. 442).

According to him, «the assessment should reflect the actual level of knowledge, but along with this, the efforts of the student must be considered. If, for example, a student had worked carefully, diligently, but achieved a satisfactory mark, a teacher next to the assessment writes: «Worked in good faith.» A similar verbal assessment of diligence is given during an oral survey. If a student, at the cost of little work, easily received a good mark, it should also be reflected in the characteristics of the work. The teacher, for example, notifies: «He has not worked enough, otherwise he could achieve better results» (Sukhomlynsky, 1976, p. 125).

V. Sukhomlynsky urged teachers: «Do not let the goal of knowledge testing simply to give a student an assessment. Let the assessment of knowledge be combined with other goals, foremost, with a new conceptualization, development, and deepening of knowledge. Do not allow extremes – the assessment of each answer, each written work leads to negative results» (Sukhomlynsky, 1976, p. 464). Why did V. Sukhomlynsky think so? The pedagogical axiom for him was that grades should be weighty, and a student should know well what he gets them for. No less important is the fact that, teaching all subjects (except for Drawing) during his teaching life, V. Sukhomlynsky never gave students unsatisfactory ratings if the student could not acquire knowledge through certain conditions and circumstances (Sukhomlynsky, 1976, p. 465). «I have always sought to ensure that a student believed in his strength. If the student *wants to know but cannot*, you need to help him take at least a small step forward, and this step will become a source of emotional stimulus of thought – the joy of knowledge» (Sukhomlynsky, 1976, p. 466).

In the works of V. Sukhomlynsky, one can find a lot of speculations about the fate of difficult children, who differ from each other and at the same time seem alike by the fact that it is difficult for them to study for they have weak mental abilities. In relation to these children you need to be especially thoughtful and patient. The scientist asks: «If it is more difficult for these children to master knowledge than for others, then what could be the criteria for measuring their knowledge? ...». Each of them has something special, individual, different from other difficult children: its own reason, its own characteristics, deviations from the norm, their own ways of education.» (Sukhomlynsky, 1977, p. 511). Therefore, a qualitative change in the mental activity of a difficult child cannot be achieved by any emergency measures or means of influencing the child's will. «You *cannot make anybody smarter*. Anyone who tries to force a child makes a fatal error ...» (Sukhomlynsky, 1977, p. 511).

The most important thing, as V. Sukhomlynsky advises, is to strengthen the child's faith in his own potential and patiently wait for the moment when at least a small shift in his mental work occurs. «From success to success is the mental education of a difficult child ... Optimism, a cheerful worldview, a sense of self-confidence is so to say, a beam that illuminates his path.

This light will go out – and the child will be in darkness, alone, he will be gripped by hopeless longing and hopelessness» (Sukhomlynsky, 1977, p. 512).

What is the main thing, according to V. Sukhomlynsky, in assessing students?

The teacher suggests the following conditions of a humane approach to this: to see the individuality of each child, to consider his attitude to learning and development prospects, to use the assessment as an incentive for hard work, success, and not punishment. As you can see, these settings are consonant with modern theoretical and practical searches in the modernization of the grading system in primary school.

Thus, V. Sukhomlynsky created an integrated pedagogical system for the comprehensive development of schoolchildren in the context of a mass comprehensive school in rural areas. Based on the integration of long-term theoretical research and targeted changes in pedagogical practice, studying the results of the school's activities, the scientist identified and justified new goals and values of school education based on humanism, the combination of individualization with the «wise collective power», a comprehensive study of the personality of a student, the introduction of innovative, organizational and methodological means of activity of the teaching staff to create educational and developing environments at school.

References

Sukhomlynsky, V.O. (1976). *Selected works in 5 t.* Kyiv.

Sukhomlynsky, V.O. (1977). *Selected works in 5 t.* Kyiv.

Savchenko, O. Ya. (2011). The development of the student's personality is the core problem of V. Sukhomlynsky. *The life-giving force of pedagogical heritage of V. Sukhomlynsky*. Donetsk: Origins, 17-22.