

## How to Provide Efficiency of Self-Education

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**Abstract.** The article deals with the purpose-oriented and organizational stages of self-education and its favorable conditions.

**Key words:** self-education, self-completion, the programme of self-education, goals of self-education.

**Statement of the problem.** The changes that have taken place in social, political and spiritual life of the society have created the need for a personality that is able to control their behavior deliberately and actively, form their own stance, be engaged in self-improvement regularly, including physical self-improvement. It is difficult to achieve this aim under the influence of only external factors, such as education, if a pupils do not work actively on their own development.

Thus, we consider a purposeful impact of a person on themselves with the purpose of self-improvement to be a very important factor of their involvement in self-education. The purposeful acceptance of external regulative factors is provided thanks to self-education, and the personality becomes an active subject of his creation.

Specific peculiarities of self-education as the factor of development lie in the fact that it is for the most part based on individual peculiarities of a personality, their penchants or needs. It allows a personality to determine their own dominant skills that can define his whole life in future, provide effective development of physical, intellectual and moral traits.

**Analysis of the scientific resources on the issue.** Scientific basis for the understanding of self-education as the factor of development of the personality was laid in the works of Ukrainian and foreign philosophers, psychologists and pedagogues. The ideas of self-development of personality, its potential for self-realization, expressed by I. S. Kon, H. S. Kostyuk, K. Rogers, L. I. Ruvinkyi and others have an essential meaning for our article.

The results of the study of the problems of self-education are widely introduced in psychological and pedagogical literature: its essence, structure and peculiarities were discovered, distinct theoretical position concerning organization of this process was made. One can find a lot of methodological recommendations for pedagogues and pieces of advice for pupils in scientific works concerning the problem of self-education by such scholars as A. Y. Aret, O. I. Donzov, A. H.

Kovalyov, L. N. Kylikova, O. I. Kochetov, H. M. Sytin, M. I. Smetanskyi, Z. I. Udich and others.

In the scientific article «Realization of educational potential of lectures and practical classes in the organization of self-education», printed in the 35th edition of the «Scientific notes» of Vinnitsia State Pedagogical University after M. Kotsyubynsky, series: Education and Psychology, we analyzed the peculiarities of the incentive level of self-education.

**Purpose of the article:** analysis of the content and peculiarities of the target and organizational stages of self-education, identification of potential opportunities of the mentioned above stages concerning motivation of students and pupils while learning this topic.

**Statement of the main information.** Briefly, the four steps of the incentive stage of self-education may sound like: I had an interest - my interest turned into a need - a desire was formed - I make decisions on the basis of the following speculations: *if I do not take a decision to act, my potential opportunities, my abilities will not be implemented. Instead of developing, improving them or approaching the record, I will conserve them because of my ambivalence and laziness. No, I will not allow it to happen because it means staying dependent on the external conditions and falling lower and lower. Today I make a decision to stop, change the way of life the way of thinking, separate from the negative environment and to go the other way - the way of my own self-development.*

It is worth noticing that various obstacles usually occur at this stage, as a result of which a person after making a decision and becoming enthusiastic soon burns out. There was a beginning, but there was no continuation. The activity was periodic and it stopped, as there was no need in its base (a very important part of a chain), without which the activity was not motivated.

So, a student got some knowledge about self-education, got interested in it, a need occurred, a desire appeared. The desire induced decision making. Still, all the mentioned above factors, such as the knowledge, the interest, the need, the desire and resolution are still **inner work** (at the stage of inner maturation). All by itself it will not be of any use without any concrete actions, without the person's being involved in an activity.

Let us consider the next stage of this process – **organizational stage**. It is characterized by taking the concrete steps aiming at self-development, and the first step is self-evaluation and setting the distinct purposes of self-education.

“How can I become better, if I do not know what is wrong with me?” This wise quote leads us to an important conclusion: in order to excel yourself, you need at first to come into yourself and look very attentively at what is going on there. As a rule, we pay attention to drawbacks, but mostly not to ours. Most often

we like to discuss other people's drawbacks. Let's remember the everlasting: "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (Matthew 7:3-5).

The incentive stage of self-education requires evaluation of one's own self-esteem which means that a pupil should look at his life, character, behavior, commit an inner judgment concerning his drawbacks of the personality. Self-awareness is known as the best of the knowledge and the ability of judging oneself objectively is considered to be the feature of wisdom. Platonov, a famous psychologist, once said: "We are wonderful when we get to know ourselves, and we are ugly when we do not do this".

At this stage it is extremely important not only to admit one's own drawbacks but to form an ***appropriate attitude towards them***. We can highlight four positions concerning the attitude towards the drawbacks:

1. A person does not even notice them. The person does not understand that he is "spoilt", "injured" and "dangerously sick". Instead of "curing" oneself a person keeps on doing nothing, being guided by the principle formulated by K. Ushynskiy: "The easiest science in the world is ignorance. It comes easy and brings no sadness to the soul". A famous Russian philosopher V. S. Solovyov wrote: "The human who is satisfied with his human limitation and does not long for more inevitably falls down to the level of animals". It is worth noticing that there are some people who are not able to evaluate themselves adequately, they are so complacent, blinded by themselves, satisfied with their state, that they do not realize their imperfection and insufficiency. Without adequate self-evaluation there can be no success in further development. It may sound ironical but the statement "The higher the level of a person's moral development is, the stronger he feels his imperfection" makes sense.

2. A person knows about their drawbacks, but it does not make them sad. They take a passive position, "close their eyes", do not resist and finally give up. Sometimes a person agrees with their drawbacks, because it seems to them that they help to solve life's problems. However, as it soon turns out, problems recur, and life gets more complicated. Instead of stopping in time, a person keeps "falling down". And it happens quite often that a person gets used to his drawbacks and to his sitting in last rows and considers it to be fine: 'the others differ from me because they are somehow special. I am not expected to achieve more. I am who I am and I will stay the same.' Therefore, a person limits his development, thinking this way: "*Can I be like the others? No, this is not for me, as my permanent*

*condition is laziness. I am not used to making efforts. I can not rise higher than the chicken's level of flying. I quitted a long time ago. But still, having heard today's lecture I will put inferiority complex away, I will try to be better. Starting with small I will think about big".*

3. A person pays attention to his drawbacks. He understands their negative effect. He/she has a negative attitude towards them. Still, despite this, the person has them. In his/her thoughts he is against them but does nothing to change the situation. A person likes to philosophize about their harm but he does nothing except talking. Thus, he/she fights with them only on the inner and declarative level.

4. A person treats their drawbacks bitterly, hates them, actively resists and "uproots" them. A famous sportsman, world champion in athletics Y. Vlasov once gave the following advice: *"Break your old character and create a new one. Not even for a minute turn to your old character. The old character is dangerous for its old diseases"*.

There are different ways of self-knowledge and self-evaluation, however, as W. Goethe said, an adequate self-evaluation can be performed only in the process of action, and can never result from simple contemplation. One of the effective ways of self-evaluation is contemplation of the remarks and pieces of advice concerning ourselves, the ones that sound repeatedly from other people, although it is not always pleasant to hear about our shortcomings, which we sometimes try to hide even from ourselves. One wise old man said about the importance of this way of self-evaluation in such a way: "... today, finally, a wise person was found, who reproached me, and was right. Today I have been very lucky. I have been criticized and I paid my attention to my shortcomings. Today I have had a "bath". I do not want to have a person by me who would only praise me, as he is my most severe enemy". Ecclesiast, king David's son, wrote the following: "It is better to hear a reproach from the wise than songs from mindless".

*Once a young PT teacher was appointed the head teacher of a school. While discussing the merits of his PT lessons, all the teachers started to "sing praises" one after another, without mentioning any shortcomings. The head teacher was young but wise, not deprived of a sense of relevant humor. To sum up everything that was said, he said: "Dear colleagues! I understand you well, but I am not dead for you to say about me only something good. I consider myself young enough and wish a further improvement, which is impossible without an adequate evaluation and correcting my shortcomings"*.

The other way of self-evaluation is to look attentively at other people and draw some parallels with yourself. To check the students' self-esteem the following questionnaire may be used:

- Name the three things (those can be classes, entertainment, actions, duties), which you do most often, as they produce a favorable impression on others.
- Name the three things, which you want to stop doing, as they influence your image negatively, however you cannot abandon them.
- Explain why you do not do your best to practice the things that will do you good (item one), but do the things, that can do you some harm (item two).

An adequate self-evaluation, self-awareness and self-analysis promote a clear definition of the goal of a self-education and a focus on further actions. The victory over yourself starts with setting a goal. The goal is an imaginary outcome, a compass, which directs our actions in the right way. It determines the sense of life in general. If there is no goal, the life is empty, vapid, the one that does not give fruit, but only a barren flower, which generates inanity. Generally speaking, a person without a goal is potentially an ill person, who flows adrift.

It should be remembered, that the goal must be adequate to the students' abilities. On the one hand, it must not exceed his abilities too much, and on the other hand, it should not be too easy to achieve. While formulating the goal of self-education in its broad meaning, it is necessary to determine those specific goals, reaching which will bring a person to a new, qualitative level, provide more qualitative changes in its structure. The goal of self-education should not be one-sided, it must be directed to the development of "muscles" of the body, brain and soul in their unity.

Thus, having set the goal, for example, of the development of mental abilities, we must simultaneously pay a considerable attention to the physical development, without which the qualitative development of intellect becomes impossible. This was well-known to old Greeks, who carved words on the rock in the motherland of Olympic Games that have been saved up to our days: "Want to be beautiful – run! Want to be strong – run! Want to be clever – run!".

In this regard it would be relevant to mention an interesting fact from the life of a famous biologist Louis Pasteur. *When being forty years old Louis Pasteur was paralyzed, after lying for a long period of time in bed and after analyzing the causes of his disease, he came to the conclusion, that the mischief had happened to him because of a great mental loading. Then he created a schedule of the day for himself and began to do physical exercises systematically. He lived for another 30 years and during this period of time he made his most important scientific discoveries.*

Inability to combine these two important directions with each other in the process of self-education means limiting one's development, falling into extremes, which reminds of a quotation of a famous sportsman Y. Vlasov: "It is sad to look at a young man and see dull biceps moving or hypertrophied brain, which is hardly held on frail legs».

However, talking about self-education, we, for some reason, make the main accent on the physical self-improvement and give examples, which are relevant exactly to this direction. At the same time, we have to admit the priority of moral self-education, albeit in the process of self-education we do not often direct our efforts at the development of some moral qualities. Moral qualities for many people stopped being the subject of striving despite the fact that we are always attracted by people who, according to the words of the famous teacher-innovator E. M. Ilyina, are shining internally.

Y. Vlasov, who has been mentioned above, was talking about unpleasantness of physical perfection of a sportsman in the absence of a moral core, namely about the fact, that the external magnitude is not worthy in the absence of internal spiritual foundation, without which the process of physical self-improvement is often blunted, gives some serious crashes and stops.

The moral core is that very component of a personality, which combines it in a single unit and cements all the qualities. Thus, a person can have a perfect intellect, developed physical qualities, aesthetic tastes. However in the absence of a moral core a person becomes, as a rule, opportunistic, uncontrolled, often loses the sense of measure, frequently becomes socially dangerous. It brings harm to the person, because the absence of spiritual, moral values cuts the root of happiness. Remember, how Pushkin wrote about Onegin: "*Was my Onegin happy? No, - feelings cooled in him early*". Or remember B. Godunov and his famous monologue which ends in such words: "*Yes, those whose conscience is unclean are pathetic...»*

In one of the contemporary serials named «Mole» there is an episode, which is deliberately repeated twice (at the beginning and at the end) to stress the importance of a moral core in the structure of personality, in the absence of which a person becomes indifferent to the way (moral or immoral), in which he reaches his goals.

A famous criminal authority "Watchmaker", who collects musical clocks, invited a young character, "Kuzma", to listen to the chime. On the background of the beautiful chime the last dialogue of the dying "Watchmaker" took place:

*Do you hear the music? Eh? Hear? There is a passage of time in watches. They remind constantly of the fact, that we are mortal.*

*And what about money? Authority? Can anything be compared with them?*

*Yes, it can. Can! But, unfortunately, we begin to understand it too late. Unless it is necessary for this to live as I did. After all, to climb the top, how many had to be taken away! And, here it is, the top. Look around. And what do I see? – Nothing! Nothing! Ah, if only I could start the life from the very beginning! But, however, everything is ahead for you. I wish you could give it all up. I wish you could!*

All these examples show that if there is a lack of spiritual component, sooner or later a human being will feel the dissatisfaction of life, emptiness and despair. In the Gospel from Matthew there are such words: “What is the use for a person of conquering the whole world, but harming the soul?».

Having set the goal and defined the focus of one’s further actions in the way of improving oneself, it is important to draw the program, namely to elaborate the strategy of further work on self-improvement. The word “planning”, as a rule, does not arouse any positive emotions, however, this stage is quite important, and if we spend some time on planning, we save it later in the process of activity. According to Meksimen’s law “We always lack time to plan clearly and perform the work precisely, but we always have time to do it again, making corrections”.

One of the most important conditions of a good program is precise formulation of the rules, following which provides a successful realization of a self-education program.

Like in the process of education, in self-education it is also important to follow some certain principles, as they are those very positions, which determine the efficiency of the process. Concerning self-education we are talking about one’s own, personally formed rules of life and behavior, which determine the efficiency of the further actions in self-education.

It will be advisable to share my own rules, which were made in student years after I realized the importance and necessity of self-education, which became a personally notional process in the certain period of studying.

- *Not later, not some time, but currently and now!*
- *Do not pity yourself today not to feel pity about wasted tomorrow.*
- *Restrain yourself from the wishes that could harm.*
- *Before letting the phrase go from your mouth, think it over; before acting – think about consequences.*
- *Do everything effectively, do not be slow. Save your time and do not waste it on some vain things.*
- *Be able to forbid yourself at once those things, which will be harmful for you and your health.*

- *Restrain negative emotions. Learn to control your mood.*
- *Made a mistake - make appropriate conclusions at once. Remember, that one learns from his mistakes. But it is better to learn from somebody's mistakes, rather than on your own.*
- *Even the most intelligent people sometimes make some gross mistakes, but unlike unwise people they do not repeat these mistakes.*
- *Do not do the things, which you do not like to please someone.*
- *Treat everything critically. Submit everything to doubts.*
- *Try to make every job with positive emotions, there is something interesting even in the most boring job.*
- *Try to be yourself.*
- *Do not discuss some shortcomings of others. It is better to tell about them to that very person.*
- *Never take revenge on anybody and do not wish harm to others, as it sooner or later will return to you. Remember, that only weak and insidious people take revenge, but strong people are always generous.*
- *Do not stop! Become more perfect with each day, week and month. Remember, improving yourself means swimming upstream; if you stop, it will carry you backward.*
- *Besides, remember, that "the world belongs to people who wake up early".*
- *And also remember: a good habit – is accumulated spiritual capital on which you could live the whole life. And, vice versa, a bad habit – is a constantly acting poison.*
- *Always mind your behavior and actions.*

The program of self-education is a quite important step; therefore it would be advisable to determine its main directions, which could become the basis of the program.

To determine the qualities, which are the most valuable in perception of a personality by other people, we suggested a task for male and female students separately, which required thinking of six main qualities, which girls appreciate the most in boys: "What is he, a true boy, like?" (for girls) and "A girl of my dreams" (for boys). The task was done by sophomores of the Institute of Physical Education and the Institute of Philology and Journalism (160 questioned).

The method of content analysis of received answers showed six main qualities, which were mentioned most often.

- *Attractiveness. External beauty. Dealing with people.*

We have put in one line the concepts "external beauty" and "attractiveness", however, it should be mentioned, that there is no big difference among them. The

French say that there are no women without charm, but there are lazy women. The woman can be not exactly beautiful, but attractive and charming at the same time. Still the external beauty is just a façade, if it is not combined with an internal content. Close acquaintance with such a girl can bring disappointment and loss of interest. The cover is beautiful, but the content of the “book” is uninteresting. According to Ch. Colton, the beauty of the body can attract true supporters; however, to keep them the beauty of the soul is needed.

- *The inner beauty, charm, modesty, weakness, restraint.* All these features can be combined by one word: “FEMININITY”.
- *Cleanliness, tidiness.*
- *Mystery* (a woman, to some extent, should be enigmatic for a man), *originality.*
- *Loyalty, devotion, ability to love truly.*
- *Domesticity, care* (it is about cooking, keeping the house clean, taking care of the husband and children)

Turgenev wrote such words: “I would give all my books away only for having the woman with me, who would care if I am late for dinner”. One of the Russian poets wrote the following: “I go to mother, here I am not judged, but a plate of soup is poured”.

And now let us consider the answers of the female students to the task “What is he, a true boy, like?”

- *Wisdom, mind, intelligence.* In this connection I would like to quote a line from a famous song “I want a happy laugh to be heard everywhere, girls to be beautiful, boys to be wise”.
- *Strength, courage, freedom* combined with kindness, warmth and internal culture. The connection between the mentioned above qualities was talked over by Democritus in due course: “The physical beauty of a man is something bestial if under it intellect is not hidden”.
- *Industriousness in everything, including work, popularity, professionalism.*
- *Self-confidence, consistency, persistence in reaching the set goals.*
- *Seriousness, responsibility, thrift.*
- *Respect towards the woman, the ability of being her support, protection, educator to children.*

The qualities mentioned above can be included into the individual program of self-education as priority qualities of a person. For realization of the program of self-education a **driving force** is needed, which appears to be a **will** (the ability to act). That is why the next important step of self-education is to intensify the will, inner

resources of a personality. Thus a person rises to the level of personality only when they acquire the ability to control themselves, restrain their own feelings and passions. The will itself generates the energy for reaching a set goal. Although the act of forcing the will, is not always pleasant, because it is frequently connected with compulsion, a future success, a future victory, a future joy will neutralize its negative character. It is not about those victories that come easily, without any special efforts. Thus, as it has been mentioned earlier, something which is easily done does not always mean it is better done.

**Conclusions.** Analyzing the two main stages of self-education (target and organizational), it is important not only to reveal their essence, but to fill it with appropriate content, which would prompt further steps of self-education. The impetus, which a pupil gets on the incentive stage should lead not only to inner work (getting interested, revealing a desire, making a decision), but provide an involvement into the active-transformational activity, which begins with detecting one's shortcomings and setting well-defined goals. To evoke in his students the desire to be included into the activity of self-improvement, an educator has to provide some interesting facts, aphorisms, quotes, pieces of advice, which reflect the importance of this process at every stage.

We have deliberately referred to such examples, aphorisms and quotes, as they are important means of influence on the values and motivational sphere of the personality of a student, without involving which the talk about self-education would have a declarative character. Further steps of the organization of self-education – is the activation of willed efforts and overcoming the barriers of self-education, which will become the subject of our next article about the problems of self-education.

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