

ON THE PROBLEM OF FIRST YEAR STUDENTS ADAPTATION TO THE LEARNING PROCESS IN A UNIVERSITY

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Published online: 24 November 2017

ABSTRACT

The relevance of the studied problem is the fact that successful adaptation of a first year student to life and academic activity in a university is the key to the further development of each student as a personality and a professional in the field of his or her activity.

The purpose of the paper is to identify the reasons for the decline in the efficiency of first year university students' academic activity and to develop an integrated program aimed at more successful first year student's adaptation to the studying process at a university.

The leading approach to the study is the personal- and activity-based one, for it allows determining the best conditions for the development of a personality as an active subject that gets to know and transforms the world and itself in the process of activity.

The results of the studying the adaptation of first year students to the learning process in a university are presented, and the authors propose an integrated program aimed at more successful adaptation of first year students to the learning process, including the meaningful, organizational and evaluative-productive components. At the same time, the substantial structure of the program was aimed at creating certain pedagogical conditions for the efficient adaptation of first year students to the learning process.

The obtained results testify the fact that the wisely structured process of the first year students adaptation allows increasing their social activity and to reduce their attrition. In this study, the process of adaptation is based on the active engagement of first year students in various mass sports events.

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doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/jfas.v9i7s.92>



The materials of the paper may be useful to scientists dealing with the issues of improving the adaptive abilities of students, as well as specialists involved in the teaching organization, teachers and university students.

Keywords: Adaptation, students, learning process, means of physical education, sports and mass sports events.

1. INTRODUCTION

The problem of students adapting to the learning process attracted the attention of researchers for the first time in the late 90s of the XX century. At the same time, despite the wide coverage of these issues, now there is no systematic approach to the organization of a complex and multi-aspect process of students' adaptation to the changing conditions of the educational space.

Social and economic changes in society lead to the aggravation of numerous social problems, including the problem of adapting students to the university conditions. In new conditions, former schoolchildren find themselves in a psychotraumatic situation, a change in the emotional state occurs, and positive activity decreases. All this leads to the need to find ways to ensure the efficient adaptation of students in society. The main function of adaptation is the individual's acceptance of the norms and values of the new social environment.

The concept of adaptation has an interdisciplinary context which develops philosophical, physiological, social, psychological, and pedagogical aspects.

G. Hegel connected the concept of adaptation with the quantitative characteristics of health - a "moderation". He interpreted this concept as the general patterns and ties between the existing circumstances and the consistent development of a personality. The philosopher pointed out that "... the essence of life and the source of its development are determined by its internal contradictions, the unity, and struggle of such opposites as stability and variability, assimilation and dissimilation. Adaptation is a measure of the unity of these opposites, the result and means of resolving the internal and external contradictions of life, and, therefore, one of its universal immanent attributes" (Gegel', 1977).

The problem of students' adaptation to university education attracts the attention of representatives of various sciences. The best known are the psychological and socio-psychological aspects of adaptation (Borodulin V.N., 2006; Polyanok O.V., 2011; Yanitsky M.S., 2000). Issues of the students' adaptation to the university education also draw close attention of pedagogues. In recent years, a number of dissertations have been defended

(Borodulin V.N., 2006; Varlamova I.V., 2006; Golubeva N.M., 2004; Zharenkova A.A., 2005; Eliseeva S.I., 2003). They consider this problem from different points of view.

Various aspects of adaptation to studying in the university were investigated by (Boronina L.N., 2001; Dorokhova T.Yu., 2009; Kruchinin V.A., 2009; Lychagina I.N., 2007; Piskun O.E., 2011; Molokova O.A., 2015; Khusainova R.R., 2005; Chikina T.E., 2009). The theoretical basis of the research was the personal- and -activity-based approach, which was studied in the works by (Zeer E.F., 2009; Zimnyaya I.A., 2003; Khutorskoy A.V., 2003). Anisimov P.F., Zenina S.R., Koroleva N.N., Muratova E.I., and Runova S.A. conducted the research in the context of the general problems of socialization and professional development of students (Anisimov P.F., 2010; Zenina S.R., 2009; Koroleva N.N., 2007; Muratova E.I., 2009; Runova S.A., 2000).

Scientific works also studied such aspects as didactic and organizational-pedagogical conditions for successful adaptation of students to university education and professional environment (Yugfeld Y.A., Pankina N.V., 2014; Dorokhova T.Yu., 2009; Kapustin Y.I., 2007; Mikhaylov A.N., 2007; Osipov E.A., 2002; Osipchukova E.V., 2009). Some papers dealt with studying the adaptation of a person in various groups and collectives (Budyakina M.N., 1973; Rastova A.M., 1973).

2. MATERIALS, METHODS AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Research methodology

The leading methodological basis for the studying the peculiarities of students' adaptation to studying at a university and developing an integrated program of creating the conditions necessary for the successful adaptation was the personality-activity approach (Zimnyaya I.A., 2000). It allows determining the most optimal conditions for the development of the personality as an active subject that gets to know and transforms the world and itself in the process of activity.

The methodological guidelines were the humanistic ideas of the education system's adaptation to students' individual features and changes in the environment (Bondarevskaya E.V., 2001; Serikov V.V., 1999); provisions on the impact of physical education and physical activity on the formation of personality (Vilensky M.Ya., 2007; A.P. Puni, 1977); the concept of self-actualization, self-development and self-expression of a person in the learning process (Kharlamov I.F., 1990; Tsukerman G.A., 1995).

2.2. Research methods:

The research involved theoretical methods: analysis of philosophic, psycho-pedagogical and scientific-methodical literature sources; generalization and modeling; organizational methods, such as comparative and integrated one; empirical methods: questioning, experimental and search activities, pedagogical observation, pedagogical experiment, and methods of mathematical statistics.

2.3. Experimental and search basis of the study

The Russian State Vocational Pedagogical University was an experimental and search basis of the research. The study involved 130 first-year students of various specialties.

3. RESULTS

Within the framework of the studied problem, the authors considered the impact of means of physical education on the task success of first year students adaptation to the learning process at a university.

The study involved first year students of various specialties at the Russian State Vocational Pedagogical University, a total of 130 people.

The first stage consisted of a survey of students, aimed at identifying the features of their adaptation to the learning process in the university.

The question: “What difficulties did you face when enrolling in the university?” was answered and ranked as follows:

- transition to a new learning system (36%);
- high volume of educational material (22%);
- housing and financial difficulties (18%);
- problems with establishing interpersonal relations in the team (24%).

The question: “What are the factors adversely affecting your health?” was answered and ranked as follows:

- excess educational load (31%);
- lack of time (25%);
- wrong work and leisure plan (17%);
- insufficient physical exercise (27%).

The question: “Do you keep track of your health?” was answered and ranked as follows:

- regularly (19%);
- occasionally (45%);
- only if I feel bad (26%);

- never (10%).

The question: “Do you like attending physical education classes?” was answered positively in 41% cases and 59% of the total number of respondents answered negatively.

The question: “Do you work out in your own accord?” was answered as follows:

- yes (20%);

- rarely (42%);

- no (38%).

The analysis of the answers may draw the following conclusions:

1. The results of the survey showed that the overwhelming majority of first year students have difficulties in adapting to the learning process. These difficulties consist in the complication of the transition to a new learning system. A large number of students highlighted the problems of interpersonal relations in the team.

2. The analysis of the factors most adversely affecting the state of health, the students noted that the greatest impact is the intensification of the learning process, as well as the lack of physical exercise.

3. At the same time, the majority of students noted that they do not significantly keep track of their health, or mind it from time to time. The respondents also indicated that they do not like attending physical education classes and doing physical exercises by themselves.

The conducted research results show that first year students face difficulties when adapting to the learning process in the university, which happens due to the transition from the school system to the university system. It also should be noted that they underestimate the importance of the role of physical education in the process of adaptation to the changed learning conditions.

According to the results, the authors end up with the need to create certain conditions for the efficient adaptation of first year students to the process of studying at a university. As it comes from the analysis of scientific and methodological literature, the authors consider the use of physical education and sports to be the most effective tool for successful adaptation. An integrated program aimed at creating the conditions necessary for the successful adaptation of first year students to the learning process in the university was developed.

The substantial structure of the program was aimed at creating certain pedagogical conditions for the efficient adaptation of first year students to the learning process. It consisted of:

- Creating background for raising the need for systematic physical exercise in students;
- Being aimed at nurturing self-confidence in the process of physical self-improvement;

- Planning the support activities on the part of the teacher on the tasks of physical development of students;
- Participation of the first year students in sports and mass events at the university and regional levels;
- Carrying out activities aimed at enhancing the comradery in the student collective (walking tours, excursions);
- Increase of emotional intensity of training sessions in physical education;
- Individual approach to the selection of physical education for successful adaptation of students to the learning process;

To increase the efficiency of students' adaptation to the learning process, the following ways to improve the quality of physical training were outlined:

- revealing the influence of the physical education specificity on the formation of professionally-applied and physical skills among the first year students in order to improve the efficiency of adaptation;
- determining of the subject matter of first year students adaptation to the learning process and the importance of the role of the means of physical education in improving the task success;
- determining of the systemic features of professional and applied skills and the development of physical qualities in first year students in order to adapt to the learning process;
- Identifying the opportunities for system and personal approaches to the formation of necessary professional and applied skills and development of physical qualities in first year students at the stage of adaptation to the learning process.

During the implementation of the integrated program into the learning process of first year students, the first year of study showed some results. By the end of the first year, the students adapted to the transition to the higher education system, to the intensification of the learning process, while the interpersonal relations in the team changed qualitatively. Students became less sensitive to the excess educational load, their physical activity significantly increased, which is justified by the increase in the voluntary physical exercises. The students became more attentive to their health, as evidenced by an increase in physical education classes attendance and a decrease in being off sick. In general, the authors note a positive dynamics in the adaptation of first year students, as evidenced by easy and natural progress of students' adaptation, consolidation of first-year students in the university, and a reduction in the students' attrition. Significantly increased is also the social activity of students: the number of students involved in the extracurricular classes and taking an active part in sports and mass events grew. Motivation for training and getting a job has activated.

Thus, the creation and testing of an integrated program allowed significantly improving the level of students' adaptation to the learning process in the university.

4. DISCUSSION

Adaptation of students to the learning process is adaptation to the changing system of training, to the loads, lifestyle, methods and forms of work, person's integration to the educational environment, acceptance of its values, norms and standards for behavior, formation of adequate interpersonal interaction, and readiness for the conditions of future professional activity.

A.B. Petrovsky considers adaptation to be the moment of the formation of the personality of an individual, a certain cycle in his or her development. The assimilation of existing norms in various types of activities, including learning, as well as acquiring methods and means of activity, occur during this period. The nature of going through this phase largely determines the direction of the further development of a person. If considering his theory from the standpoint of socio-psychological adaptation, one should distinguish three main phases.

The first phase of the personality development means the assimilation of existing norms and rules of behavior, acquiring the appropriate forms and means of activities, bringing all that constitutes the individuality of the subject, without which one can not realize the need to manifest himself as a person, to the new social group. The individual has a need to be like everyone else, to adapt as much as possible in a society.

The second phase is determined by the actualization of the contradiction between the achieved result of adaptation and the need "to be a person" unsatisfied during the first stage. At this stage a person searches for ways and means to indicate his or her individuality. This stage was called personalization.

The third phase is described as the contradiction between the ambition of the subject to be "himself" (formed at the previous stage) and the need to fulfill a certain role, thereby experiencing a state of self-affirmation and expressing one's own creative abilities (Petrovsky, 1982).

Analysis of scientific literature allows drawing a conclusion that students' adaptation to the learning process in a university is a key to the students' successful activities. Adaptation is an element of activity, the function of which is to assimilate stable environment conditions for students, to solve recurrent typical problems by using the methods of behavior and actions adopted in the university collective. The main method of adaptation is the adoption of norms and values of a social environment that is new to the first year students (group, team, or

teachers), the existing forms of social interaction in the environment (formal and informal links, leadership style), as well as the forms of subject activity (the organization of training, training technology, methods of knowledge control).

Indicators of successful adaptation are the high status of a student in the team and the psychological satisfaction with this team both with the collective in general and with its most important elements (satisfaction with studying and its conditions, its content and organization). The indicators of low adaptation are dissatisfaction with the team and developing formal and informal ties, labor of studying, its organization, everyday life, etc. All this leads to low rates of academic progress, and in some cases to expulsion. This is typical for most first year students who failed to adapt to university requirements and were unable to quickly join the university life.

For some time after the beginning of studying at the university, students retain similarities with high school students. However, while they are adapting to new (university) conditions, the attributes of the majority of the students are becoming more and more evident. The structure and conditions of the university learning process, compared to the ones at school, are significantly complicated. The volume of the educational load is increasing, teaching forms and methods are changing, and the pedagogical requirements are getting higher. The significant features include not only intense mental work in the setting of the lack of time, but also a decrease in the volume of physical activity, which adversely affects the health (Revenko. E.M., Sal'nikov, V.A., 2017).

Young people entering the system of higher education need to develop new ways of behavior that allow them to most closely correspond to their new status. Finding themselves in a student team for the first time, many young people adapt not fast and easily enough. Many students feel insecure, by themselves, experiencing a heightened sense of being out of their comfort zone during this period. The inability of students to reconstruct the methods of educational and cognitive activity in accordance with the new conditions of educational work by themselves makes them feel confused and dissatisfied. Moreover, it results in a negative attitude towards learning as a whole.

The general system of factors obstructing the students' adaptation to university education include the following significant factors:

- insufficient formedness of knowledge and skills of independent work;
- failure in self-regulation of a person's behavior and activities, exacerbated by the lack of the usual daily teacher's control;
- unwillingness to organize a personal lifestyle in new conditions;

- negative experiences related to leaving school collective with their strong mutual and moral support;
- uncertainty in the profession selection;
- settling everyday life and independent living skills, especially when moving from home to a dormitory (Kareva, 2006).

The problem of the students' health impact on their adaptation to university education is becoming especially relevant now.

For successful adaptation, the significant effect is provided by the use of means and methods of physical education. The system of physical education classes successfully solves the problem of socio-psychological education of young students and contributes to a more rapid formation of interpersonal relationships within the student collective. Wisely organized physical education during this period is an important factor in the students' development and adaptation in a new environment.

One of the important factors of health promotion is the systematic use of exercise load. They are a combination of physical activities performed in everyday life, as well as independently and combined with the term of "physical activity" (Naskalov, V.M., 2013).

Physical activity is one of the elements of self-regulation of a human body that determines its normal vital activity. Insufficient physical activity may adversely affect the health, the functional state of various body systems, and working capacity in general. At the same time, the optimal regime not only improves physical fitness, but also provides a much higher level of mental working capacity and its stability in a variety of professional activities. At the same time, the loss of time for learning due to illnesses is significantly reduced, and the specific resistance of the organism to adverse effects like cooling, overheating, and infections, increases (Zimkin, 2007)

Intensification of educational work in universities is usually related to the limited physical activity (lack of the need to move makes 50–70% of the optimal level on the average) on the one hand, while low physical activity is associated with low motivation of students to use means of physical education in everyday life (Malyarenko, 1996) on the other hand.

In this regard, the field of physical education and sports is being developed intensively. The implementation of innovative physical education programs and technologies at various levels of education, especially in the system of higher education, is being carried out (Bozhovich, 2006). However, despite a large number of various programs, it was repeatedly noted that the state system for the formation of physical education and the health in Russian youth is not functioning effectively enough (Grigor'ev, 2008).

In order to successfully adapt students to higher education, as the authors believe, the necessary conditions should be created that would preserve and improve physical health, increase its intellectual potential and the efficiency of educational activities.

5. CONCLUSION

Thus, the problem of first year students adaptation to the learning process at the university led to realizing the need to create an adaptive environment for education, adaptive forms and methods of teaching that, on the one hand, create conditions that are adjusted to the level and characteristics development of students, and on the other hand, are aimed at the formation of such abilities of students, which would allow them to adapt themselves in the surrounding environment.

The integrated program developed by the authors would increase the adaptation of the first year student to studying at the university, for it is an important component of the development of each student, both as a person and the professional in his field. The process of first year students adaptation to the university plays an important role, since it ensures the effective involvement of a student in the learning process. Wisely structured process of the first year students adaptation allows increasing their social activity and to reduce their attrition. In this study, the process of adaptation is based on the active engagement of first year students in various mass sports events.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The materials of the paper may be useful to scientists dealing with the issues of improving the adaptive abilities of students, as well as specialists involved in the teaching organization, teachers, university students, and other interested people.

The proposed integrated program for the adaptation of first year students to the learning process at the university is aimed at organizing the process of adaptation, forming the conditions of the learning process, and is focused on the successful and effective students' involvement into the surrounding educational space.

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How to cite this article:

Ketrish E V, Andryukhina T V, Tret'yakova N V, Permyakov O M, Barakovskikh K N, Safronovich I E. On the problem of first year students adaptation to the learning process in a university. *J. Fundam. Appl. Sci.*, 2017, 9(7S), 1016-1031.