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Socio-cultural Approach to the Definition of "Intelligentsia" in Pedagogy

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Abstract

The problem of the existence of a huge variety of definitions of the concept of "intelligentsia" and identifying approaches is posed in the article that most fully satisfy the consideration of this concept within the framework of various scientific fields. Sociocultural approaches to the definition of "intelligentsia" are characterized. The authors consider the sociocultural approach as the most fully revealing the essence of this definition from the point of view of pedagogy. The article defines the "intelligentsia" within the framework of the socio-cultural approach, the essence of the concept "educational activity of the intelligentsia" is revealed.

Keywords: intelligentsia; sociocultural approach; pedagogy; educational activities; sociocultural community.

Introduction

At all times, the intelligentsia have been taking a special place in the life of society. The problem is that there are so many definitions of "intelligentsia". Among the many questions about the formation, development and position of the intelligentsia in society, the most debated question remains the definition of the very concept of "intelligentsia".

In pedagogy, "intelligentsia" as a concept is viewed quite rarely, as a rule, in the context of the activities of this community. However, there is the problem of choosing a rational approach to the definition of this concept, which characterizes it from the pedagogical side. Along with the main approaches used in other branches of knowledge, in pedagogy it is necessary to consider the concept of "intelligentsia" from the point of view of a personality-oriented approach, which allows exploring not only the results of intellectuals, but also the motives that prompted them to commit certain actions. The sociocultural approach, in our opinion, is closest to the disclosure of the concept of "intelligentsia" in pedagogical science.

Based on the foregoing, the hypothesis is formulated as follows: a sociocultural approach is the most acceptable to the definition of the concept "intelligentsia" in pedagogy.

The purpose of the research is to study various approaches to the definition of the concept "intelligentsia" in order to identify the most rational one from the point of view of pedagogy.

In addition, within the framework of this study, we will be interested in the formulation of the concept of "educational and educational activities of the intelligentsia" as referring directly to pedagogical science.

The History of the Word "Intelligentsia"

Currently, there are more than 300 definitions of the concept of "intelligentsia". Let us try to approach this concept through the history of the word "intelligentsia". The word intelligentsia comes from the classical Cicero's Latin; its meaning was interpreted as "understanding", "ability to understand".

Hence, the meaning of the word "intelligentsia" has been changing throughout the entire time of its existence, but almost all authors associate it with the human mind and thinking. Among them D. Mirsky quotes the definition of "intelligence" from the Oxford Dictionary: "part of the nation, striving for independent thinking." [6].

Until the 60s of the XIX century in Russian, the word "intelligentsia" was used in the sense of "reasonableness, consciousness, the activity of intellect". The concept of

“intelligentsia” in the vocabulary of the literary Russian language was introduced by the writer, playwright, journalist, essayist, critic and literary historian P. D. Boborykin in 1866. The author explained that he borrowed this term from German culture, where it was used to denote the part of society that is engaged in intellectual activity. Boborykin meant “intelligentsia” as the “highest educated stratum of our society ... a truly developed class of Russian society.” [2]

Thus, P.D. Boborykin opposes the social class approach to the definition of the concept “intelligentsia”, putting in focus the principles that the “genuine” (in Boborykin terminology) intelligentsia must adhere to regardless of origin, position or social status.

The term “intelligentsia” had been taking root in the Russian language for long time, having a particular number of opponents of the use of foreign words.

The concept of “intelligentsia” is investigated toward such sciences as philosophy, history, cultural studies, sociology, and pedagogy. In modern science, two approaches to the definition of this concept are most widely used: 1) moral and ethical (in philosophical and cultural studies) and 2) historical and sociological (in sociology and historical research).

Socio-cultural Approach to the Definition of "Intelligentsia"

In pedagogy, defining the concept of “intelligentsia,” there is a synthesis of moral, ethical, and historical and sociological approaches. In the Pedagogical Encyclopedic Dictionary, ed. B.M. Bim-Bada intelligentsia is understood as “the social stratum of people professionally engaged in mental, mostly complex, creative work, development and dissemination of culture.” The author notes that “the concept of the intelligentsia is often given a moral meaning, considering it as a carrier of high morality and intelligence” [1]

The formation of the intelligentsia as a social stratum of people is, above all, a pedagogical task. According to MS Kagan, “the formation of the intelligentsia ... is in the sphere of competence of education, which, of course, relies on the education of the individual, but has its own goals and its own ways of influencing human consciousness. ... The education of new generations of the Russian intelligentsia must include the formation of a consciousness of civic responsibility of each of its representatives for the fate of their country” [3].

There are five approaches to understanding (defining) intellectuals: 1. An intellectual is a noble person, a representative of “high society”, preferably a nobleman. 2. An intellectual is an intellectual worker. 3. An intellectual is an educated, charming person who knows how to behave in a decent society. 4. Intelligence is a certain moral position, it is opposition to everything anti-human, it is not indifferent to everything that happens in society. 5. The intellectual combines excellent education and upbringing with an active moral attitude, that is, he is not indifferent to everything that happens in society and throughout the world. Intelligence is seen as a developed sense of duty to its people, to society.

In our opinion, “intelligentsia” is such a concept that it is not enough to designate as cultural or social, due to the fact that such a description will be incomplete. And it is precisely the concept of “socio-cultural” that most fully denotes this or that phenomenon. The combination of cultural and social is characterized as an integrative interweaving of elements of the world community, societies, communities, people, culture, environment.

I.V. Rudakova in the article “Socio-cultural approach as a methodological principle” considers that “the sociocultural method, understood as multidimensional, due to the possibility of combining various aspects of the object's vision, allows us to show it as a bright, multifaceted, lively education that is in continuous development.” [9]

At the same time, a large role in such integration is assigned to a person, since it is he who during his activity forms and transforms the world around him.

Many authors see the intelligentsia as a special social stratum, a large group whose main occupation was mental work, considered in a broad moral context, and for which moral search became a kind of social purpose. For example, Yu.A. Levada believes that the Russian definition of “intelligentsia” contains much more than a “stratum” or “social group”. In his work “The Intelligentsia”, he highlighted the idea of the intelligentsia itself about its social

mission. He attributed to the intelligentsia a group of “not just educated people, but also a certain community, seeing the meaning of its existence in bearing the fruits of education (culture, enlightenment, socio-political consciousness) to the people, and likening this task to a sacred (at least cultural-historical) mission [5].

As can be seen, within the framework of the sociocultural approach there are various options for defining the intelligentsia. A common idea is about the intelligentsia as a group that performs not only professional, but also certain social and cultural functions in society. Adequately reflecting the intrinsic features of the intelligentsia, such an approach can become a tool in the study of this social community.

The main thing in the sociocultural approach is an emphasis on a person in a complex and constantly changing social space. It is especially important that we are talking about people who were alive or once living with their passions, ups and delusions, discoveries and mistakes, people who experienced their historical epoch together with others, but, as a rule, more acutely reflecting and reflexing their reflections to society. If intellectuals are viewed as a real category of people, the sociocultural approach should also include a socio-professional component, since intellectuals in the mass have a profession that is meaningful for them not only in material terms, but also in value. It is impossible to reduce the professional affiliation to the formal status and discard it as an inessential characteristic. A writer, lawyer, professor, engineer, doctor, teacher is busy primarily with his profession, he is concerned with the development of his own competence, he thinks a lot and talks about his profession.

In characterizing this category, it is important to avoid extremes: as a purely formal, sociological, or rather, statistical approach, according to which all those people who are engaged in intellectual work are intellectuals, so the intelligentsia is defined as a socially marginal group, for which its own profession means nothing.

It is also essential that this category has an influence in society, because a critical assessment, diagnosis and prognosis, the possibilities of choice occur in a relatively mass group.

As part of the sociocultural approach, it is logical to follow the idea that the researcher, studying the actions of people, should first be interested in how people themselves understand their activities, how they are treated, how standard they behave in it, to what extent and how successfully they try to restructure it. In our opinion, this is important both for analyzing the historical past and the current situation.

Thus, in this study, “intelligentsia” means a sociocultural community with a complex structure that consists of a set of individuals, individuals with a certain level of education, having certain moral and ethical features and qualities for which mental work is the main occupation.

The cultural potential of a region is determined primarily by the degree of participation of the local intelligentsia in its formation, its size, social activity, the direction of its cultural, creative, educational, enlightening activities, etc. One of the peculiarities of the activity of the provincial intelligentsia is its educational effect on other segments of the population. The intellectual has always played the role of educator of subsequent generations of intellectuals.

In addition to their main professional activities, representatives of the intelligentsia also carry out many other activities that contribute to the cultural and economic development of the region. These include educational, enlightening, charitable, cultural creative, scientifically research, preventive, propaganda and other activities.

From the point of view of pedagogy, we are interested in the educational activities of the intelligentsia, which, according to O. Kravchenko, in a broad sense means “the process of assimilation by a person of a certain system of scientific knowledge, practical skills and abilities, and associated with them one or another level of mental development - cognitive and creative activities, as well as moral and aesthetic culture, which together define the social face of this person” [4]

As a rule, in literature this concept is divided into two components: educational activities and enlightening activities. In particular, Art. 1 of the “Model Law on the Status of the Employee of Education”, educational activities are understood as “a set of consecutive actions taken by the organizers of education, pedagogical and other educators to achieve the results stipulated by the social goals of education and its objectives” [8].

The “Model Law on Enlightenment Activities” gives the following definition: “Enlightenment is a type of non-formal education, a set of informational and educational activities to promote and purposeful dissemination of scientific knowledge and other socially important information that form the general culture of a person, the basis of his world view to competent action (to practical activity “with knowledge of the case”)” [7]

By educational activities of the intelligentsia, we will mean a set of consistent actions undertaken by representatives of the intelligentsia, aimed at organizing formal and non-formal education, leading the propaganda and dissemination of scientific knowledge and socially important information among the population. To this type of activity we include the conduct of professional pedagogical activity, the opening of schools, higher educational institutions, scientific activity, the opening of libraries, museums, theaters, the creation of textbooks and scientific-methodical literature, the organization of archival work, etc.

Conclusion

Having studied several different approaches to the formation of the concept of “intelligentsia”, we came to the conclusion that, from the pedagogical point of view, this term is most deeply revealed when using the sociocultural approach. This is reflected in the fact that from a pedagogical point of view, in defining this concept, we are more interested in certain activities of the intelligentsia aimed at developing and promoting education and enlightenment, as well as the motives that prompted representatives of this community to engage in educational activities.

And only the sociocultural method, combining a social and cultural component, allows us to designate the intelligentsia as a community consisting of “living” people who have their own motives, aspirations, achievements, while carrying on their shoulders the achievements of science and culture to the broad masses, contributing to the education of the general population.

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