# THEORETICAL CORE CONCEPTS IN DEVELOPING THE HIGHER EDUCATION IN SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES

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### INTRODUCTION

In the conditions of socio-economic transformations, the role of each individual with developed abilities and potentials, is increasing. It is in today's conditions of uncertainty, unpredictable risks, and instability that society needs individuals who are able to mobilize their potential and increase their proactivity for transformative democratic changes. The wealth of the country is determined by the developed personal potential of its citizens, capable of transforming society, creating material and spiritual values.

Today, the scientific and pedagogical community is concerned about the scale of crisis phenomena in many areas of social life. In modern conditions of socio-economic challenges and military conflicts, the most important resource for sustainable development of society is the potential of the individual, which provides the individual with the ability to self-development and self-improvement, as well as responsibility in making decisions in various areas of his life. Young people must adequately and proactively respond to constant changes and challenges in society. Therefore, the activation and realization of the personal potential of each young person is one of the main tasks of modern education. After all, the uniqueness of each individual is beyond doubt. However, the ability to express one's uniqueness and self-affirmation turns out to be a problem for most young people.

One of the main tasks of Ukrainian society is to create conditions for the personal development of student youth, who are preparing for independent life, self-realization of their essential strengths and potentials for the benefit of society and the state in conditions of uncertainty.

The topicality of the problem under study is determined by significant

experience in terms of the theoretical basis for building the educational process in higher education is timely. After all, today the Scandinavian countries are among the most prosperous countries in the world with an advanced system of social protection of the population, a developed economy and political stability, as well as with the highest percentage of population involvement in the process of continuing education, where practical educational work with student youth in the field of realizing their potential is the number one priority.

In addition, the current study becomes even more significant in the context of a comprehensive and integrated approach to the problem in the field of various sciences: philosophy, sociology, psychology, as well as pedagogy, where conceptual ideas are embodied in specific educational technologies and methods.

## 1. Humanistic trends in modern education in Scandinavian countries

Pointing to the relevance of the humanistic vector of movement in modern society, scholars argue that the "rediscovery of humanism" is the main feature of the modern style of thinking: specialists in all fields of knowledge should think humanistically about ways to solve problems, their own and universal human experience, various theories, and themselves[1]. The development of education systems in Scandinavian countries is associated with humanism as a systematic conscious attempt to put into practice all the best that people know about their nature and their ability to learn. According to A. Combs, the future requires the educational process to be oriented, first of all, to the "inner life" of the individual, which is manifested in his values, self-esteem and emotions, and to take into account the personal experience of the subjects of education[2]. Therefore, European educators quite rightly raise the question of the humanistic orientation of the modern educational process, which is caused by the "rediscovery" of the pedagogy of dialogue. As P. Freire argues, there is no other way for true humanism than dialogue, which consists in the commitment of a person to the constant transformation of reality[3]. Dialogue is a friendly relationship that "proclaims" this world through the mediation of the surrounding world. Together with the transformation of the world, they humanize it[4]. The "return to humanism" in the conditions of modern education involves resorting to:

– dialogue as an analysis of specific human actions (for example, solving moral and ethical dilemmas of everyday life);

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[1] Adams E. M. Metaphysics of Self and World: Toward a Humanistic Philosophy. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991. P.284.

[2] Combs A. W. Humanistic Education: Too Tender for a Tough world? *Phi Dielta Kappa.* 1981. Vol. 62, № 6. P. 446-449.

[3] Freire P. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Rio de Janeiro: Edições Paz eTerra, 2003.

[4] Ibid. P. 124

– dialogue as an analysis of certain cultural and historical events of social life in order to take into account the moral and ethical aspect of their results[5].

It is through dialogue that humanistic ideas are disseminated in the educational process and the connection of educational practices with life is strengthened. Dialogue is an interaction that determines the effectiveness of communication by taking into account the identity of communicants, as well as the differences and originality of their views[6]. Dialogue is a special form of communication that provides an opportunity to improve the processes of joint cognition and coordinate actions in the team in order to achieve real social changes. At the same time, the idea that dialogue is an activity aimed at discovery and new understanding. Dialogue is a constant developmental and communicative interaction that contributes to a deeper understanding of the world, one's self and other people in general[7].

N. Burbules describes dialogue as symbolic communicative relations between equal partners, which require these partners to have formed intellectual-cognitive and emotional qualities (tolerance, respect, etc.) and at the same time develop them. The scientist builds his understanding of dialogical relations on the basis of the creative possibilities of the game, since for a productive dialogue, as well as for a successful game, creativity, spontaneity and emotionality of the participants are important. The similarity is also manifested in the fact that some games are focused on achieving victory over an opponent, others on obtaining pleasure from communication. In some games, the spirit of competition is expressed much more strongly than in others. There are games that can be played alone. Also, as in any game, in a dialogue, certain rules must be followed. As for the rules, in both the game and the dialogue they are fundamental principles that determine a certain type of activity and make it possible to manage this activity. Not every type of communicative activity can be a dialogue. Therefore, the presence of certain rules makes it possible to understand whether communication is a dialogue. The purpose of comparing dialogue with a game is to focus attention on the process, not on the result. A game can captivate people. It also can be applied to dialogue, which develops due to the involvement of participants in it[8].

Considering the rules in dialogue by comparing them with a game allows the author to reflect on them, provide some recommendations for their practical implementation, and identify four main styles of dialogue that are

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[5] Toulmin S. Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity. New York: Free Press, 1992. P. 34.

[6] Федоренко С. В. Теорія і методика формування гуманітарної культури студентів вищих навчальних закладів США. Дисертація на здобуття ступеня доктора педагогічних наук. Київ, 2017.

[7] Burbules N. Dialogue in Teaching: Theory and practice. New York: Teachers College Press, 1993. P. 8.

[8] Ibid.

actively used in American higher education today: dialogue-conversation; dialogue-research; dialogue-discussion (debate); dialogue-instruction for teaching logical and conceptual ideas[9].

Regarding the basic principles of organizing dialogue, it is advisable to refer to the thorough scientific work by Ukrainian scholar H. Ball in this area. Considering dialogue as an integral characteristic of modern humanistic education, he identifies six basic principles of its successful implementation, the so-called dialogic universals[10]:

1) the principle of respect for the partner, their qualities as an organic whole (in particular, their individual characteristics) and as a subject itself, implies a sincere recognition that the interests and aspirations of the partner are no less important, their thoughts are no less interesting and valuable than their own;

2) the principle of accepting the partner as he is, and at the same time focusing on their highest achievements (real and potential);

3) the principle of dialogic interaction based on respect for the partner, accepting them as they are, as well as respect for oneself;

4) the principle of concordance – agreement of the dialogue participants on the basic knowledge, norms, values and goals that guide them;

5) the principle of tolerance;

6) the principle of the fullest use of the potential of culture, the inclusion of a specific dialogue in the "great dialogues" through which culture functions and develops[11].

Thus, today, the humanistic approach is being successfully applied to both the theory and practice of education, contributing "to favourable conditions for the manifestation of individuality, independence in expressing views on a particular issue, in forming the ability to successfully interact with others, to listen and to hear others, to respect their beliefs, to correlate and coordinate their own views with the views of other participants"[12]. Humanistic education is viewed an interconnected subject-subject system of improving the emotional and intellectual spheres of personal development of young people, which is based on a positive attitude towards life in all its manifestations and occurs throughout life.

Danish educators are reckoning that modern people often suffer from uncertainty, but they have to fight for self-affirmation and recognition, in particular in the process of interaction with others, with the surrounding world, which ultimately leads to a deeper understanding of themselves through self-

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[9] Ibid. P. 120.

[10] Балл Г. О. Орієнтири сучасного гуманізму (в суспільній, освітній, психологічній сферах). Житомир: ПП «Рута», 2008.

[11] Ibid. P. 24-29.

[12] Fedorenko S. Humanistic Foundations of Foreign Language Education: Theory and Practice. *Advanced Education*. 2018. Vol. 10. P. 27.

knowledge and knowledge of the world in general. As for self-knowledge, it is based on: the ideas that a person has about himself/herself; assessments of one's own capabilities and abilities, one's life purpose, which influences the process of appropriating meaningful life values and the nature of activity, generally contributing to the harmonious individual's development[13].

Another concept at the core of education in Scandinavian countries is the philosophical and educational concept of Bildung. The roots of this concept go deep into European thinking and pedagogy. In the classical era, the Greeks called the ego "paideia", and in the 17th century, Protestant pietists considered Bildung as personal religious, spiritual and moral growth in the image (German: *Bild*) of Christ. From 1774 to 1810, such thinkers as Herder, Schiller, and von Humboldt studied the building already as a non-religious phenomenon, connecting it with emotional, moral, and intellectual development, culture and education, as well as the role of a person as a citizen.

The concept of Bildung acquired an important role in the Enlightenment era, when the idea of education became the basis of the intellectual uplift and revival of the spiritual culture of Germany. But the interpretation of Bildung in the Enlightenment philosophy was mainly social: education is needed not only and not so much by the individual, but by the state. Therefore, at that time Bildung was often understood as the education of civic values and socially useful qualities of the individual. Later, when in the works of Goethe and Humboldt, the term Bildung expands its meaning and becomes a complex concept, combining the concepts of general education and personal development. In this regard, Bildung is beginning to be used to denote general education aimed at continuous personal development[14].

It should be emphasized that even today the German term Bildung has no exact analogue in either the English or Ukrainian languages. Its meaning is quite complex and comprehensive, encompassing such terms as: self-improvement, self-development, education, general culture, creativity. In modern terms Bildung is understood as humanistically oriented education and cultivation of the intellect, as well as a way of developing individual attitudes and critical thinking[15]. Modern researchers interpret Bildung as a lifelong educational journey that expands the boundaries of (self)knowledge[16]. The word "journey" is increasingly becoming a central metaphor in the definition

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[13] Hansen N. B., Andersen C. H., Komischke-Konnerup L., von Oettingen A. Dannelse that works. Efterskoleforeningen, 2015. P. 5.

[14] Moos L. Educational leadership: leadership for/as Bildung? *International Journal of Leadership in Education*. 2003. Vol. 6. P. 19-33.

[15] Masschelein J., Ricken N. Do We (Still) Need the Concept of Bildung? *Educational Philosophy and Theory*. 2003. Vol. 35. P. 151.

[16] Varkøy Ø. The concept of "Bildung". *Philosophy of Music Education Review*. 2010. Vol. 18. P. 88.

of Bildung[17]. Since this movement is both individual and collective, dialogue and conversation are important methods of the process of personal growth.

One aspect of Bildung might be called an expansion into the inner world: the accumulation of conscious, thoughtful education, enculturation, shared life experiences, and moral and emotional development.

Lene Rachel Andersen identifies four relatively tangible aspects of Bildung that, when combined, can help us understand the multifaceted nature of Bildung and consider it in the context of adult education. These four aspects are communicable knowledge and understanding, non-communicable knowledge and understanding, empowerment, and empowerment. These four aspects, separately as well as in complex, are ongoing and continue to develop as we encounter the world. They are also interrelated, and together these aspects of our cognitive, intellectual, and emotional development create a multidimensional inner world that can be stimulated, inspired, and challenged in many ways[18].

The first aspect of Bildung concerns the ability to understand the environment, and it also includes the knowledge that people share with each other in order to gain this understanding. Among the knowledge that is transmitted are science, mathematics, crafts, languages, stories, philosophy, political ideology, religious dogmas, history, orientation with a map, how to fix a bicycle, traffic rules, how to book a train ticket online, how to cook food, what not to post on social media, etc., so it is not only academic knowledge, but also everyday knowledge (German: *Allgemeinbildung*). People can gain this knowledge through books, television, YouTube videos, teachers, friends, etc. Since this kind of knowledge is transmitted from one person to another, and each person is also able to expand his or her horizons on their own, it is also called horizontal knowledge and understanding. Transmitted knowledge is acquired through a variety of educational institutions and programs, from primary, secondary and higher education to a wide variety of informal education and lifelong learning. In order for this transmitted knowledge to become understanding, it must be experienced in the real world and/or reflected upon, either alone or in conversations with others[19].

The second aspect of Bildung concerns moral and emotional development. This kind of knowledge comes from life itself, for example, when people experience disappointments, grieve, lose or win, interact with friends, accept responsibility, fail, succeed, etc. As people go through many different situations in life, they have the opportunity to learn from them and to get to

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[17] Hansen N. B., Andersen C. H., Komischke-Konnerup L., von Oettingen A. Dannelse that works. Efterskoleforeningen, 2015.

[18] Andersen L. R. Bildung – Keep Growing. A Report to the Club of Rome. N. p.: Nordic Bildung, 2020.

[19] Ibid.

know themselves and other people better. But such knowledge is not transmitted directly. Only by interacting with other people, meeting or failing to meet their expectations, making mistakes and achieving success, and overcoming all sorts of obstacles to which one must adapt, does a person gain a different understanding and develop differently than when simply expanding one's horizons. One can thus think of this process as vertical development, or vertical knowledge and understanding[20].

Bildung also concerns the existential meaning and autonomy: in order for people to be empowered and gain autonomy in their own lives, existential meaning, a sense of purpose, and personal agency must become part of their moral and emotional development. Both inner expansion and existential meaning and autonomy develop and emerge from interaction with the surrounding culture, which provides an individual with language, aesthetics, symbolic worlds, moral values and ethics, and hence the ability to build connections with others and with society. That leads to the third aspect of Bildung, which concerns which social groups a person identifies himself/herself with and for which he/she is able to take responsibility. In turn, the fourth aspect, civic empowerment, means that a person feels equipped and motivated to participate as a citizen; it means having the inner drive and self-confidence to speak out and participate. This is precisely what can be learned in the process of popular Bildung[21].

Bildung is thus a process of individual maturation and the assumption of increasing personal responsibility to family, friends, fellow citizens, society, humanity, our globe and the global heritage of the humankind, while enjoying increasing personal, moral and existential freedoms. Bildung is acculturation and lifelong learning that allows people to develop and change, it is existential and emotional depth, it is the eternal interaction and struggle of new knowledge, culture, art, science, morality, ethics, spirituality, religion, aesthetics, perspective, people and truth, and it means being an active citizen. Bildung is emancipation (liberation) and a continuous process that never ends.

The philosophical and educational concept of Bildung is implemented in the educational process through humanistically oriented pedagogical technologies that are based on:

1) freedom of expression and argumentation of one's own thoughts and the thoughts of others;

2) development of the ability to transform one's beliefs into justified concepts;

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[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.

3) development of the ability to moral and ethical reasoning and judgments[22].

The first of the three aspects mentioned is called "discursive initiation", which involves reflection between different statements and their justifications; the second means the recognition of each person's ability to choose; the third includes (self)reflection and critical thinking[23].

Therefore, for each person, one must look at bildung without focusing on the result or on the question of whether he has a lot of bildung. The question should be whether the person's horizontal and vertical understanding has improved, whether they have begun to find more meaning in their life as they age, whether they feel more capable of civic engagement, whether they feel curious and motivated to expand their circles of belonging – rather than withdraw from large circles in order to feel comfortable and safe. When a person is uncomfortable with the existential depth and meaning that increases with age, when they do not feel that they are understood, respected, and trusted by their peers and others, or when they struggle with burnout or anxiety, it may be worth considering whether this is due to insufficient bildung for their context.

All the aforementioned aspects of Bildung as a prerequisite for the self-development of an individual are present in the educational process of higher education institutions in the Scandinavian countries. At the same time, both the teacher and the student gain experience in participating in common challenges and exploring a common world during a democratic and inclusive educational process.

## 2. Theoretical basis for building the educational process in terms of self-realization

The recognition theory originates from Hegel's "master/subordinate" model[24]. The concept of recognition outlined in this model assumes that it is through recognition by others that young people begin to realize themselves. For Hegel, a person becomes a subject, considering himself as an addressee or interlocutor of other subjects. The master/subordinate model assumes that self-consciousness is dependent on another person, which in effect requires recognition by another person. Furthermore, recognition is seen as a requirement for understanding. The purpose of recognition is not to transcend or deny one's own perspective as an individual in a particular place and context. Rather, recognition occurs within these boundaries. Through

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[22] Stojanov K. The Concept of Bildung and Its Moral Implications. Becoming oneself / K. Schneider (Ed.). VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2012.

[23] Ibid.P. 86.

[24] Hansen N. B., Andersen C. H., Komischke-Konnerup L., von Oettingen A. Dannelse that works. Efterskoleforeningen, 2015.

understanding and recognizing others, one's self-understanding is transformed and one's horizons are expanded. This Hegelian master/subordinate model provides an understanding of how people, as autonomous individuals, can come to terms with the community of which they are a part. The first step in recognizing difference is self-consciousness, as we move from subjectivity to intersubjectivity. One of the key aspects of Hegel's theory of recognition is the shift from individual consciousness to intersubjective consciousness. For Hegel, although self-consciousness exists in itself and for the person, a more important characteristic is that it exists only in recognition. In other words, subjectivity exists only through intersubjectivity; and therefore people must find their subjectivity in the external "objective spirit" of culture[25].

Recognition, then, involves both a person's relationship with themselves and their relationship with others. It evokes both the notion of respect and the basic search for understanding that must be of primary importance in relationships with others. In recognizing the other, the individual does not claim absolute knowledge of that other. According to the famous American philosopher Richard Rorty, "in recognizing others, we see people as generators of new descriptions, not as individuals whom we hope to describe accurately"[26]. From another perspective, Charles Tylor argues that recognition, in a sense, involves a re-cognition, a "re-cognition," a kind of re-acquaintance with oneself. The scholar means this when he notes that recognition is based on the concept of memory; it involves the recollection of a repeated "being" that is inherent in all people[27]. Thus, by recognizing the other, the individual recalls the "being" of the other that they share. This means that recognition is based on the presumption of a common community in which identity is formed, projected, constructed, and understood. As a result, the recognition of difference is at the same time a recognition of the sameness and commonality of people's being in the world.

Later, in his book The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts, the German philosopher and sociologist Axel Honneth continues and develops Hegel's ideas[28]. He agrees that a person's relationship to himself/herself is not a singular, but rather an intersubjective process, that a person's relationship to himself arises when a person encounters another's relationship to himself. Emphasizing that establishing a relationship of mutual

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[25] Hegel G. W. F. Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness: Lordship and Bondage. Phenomenology of the Spirit. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977. P. 111.

[26] Rorty R. Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979. P. 378.

[27] Taylor C. The Politics of Recognition. A Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition / A. Gutmann (Ed.). Princeton University Press, 1992.

[28] Honneth A. The Struggle for Recognition. The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts. Cambridge: The MIT Press? 1996.

recognition is a prerequisite for self-realization, the scholar argues that people's struggle for recognition takes place within the framework of relationships of love, law, and moral and ethical life, which, in his opinion, constitute relationships of recognition through which individuals mutually affirm each other as autonomous and unique individuals[29].

A. Honneth [1996] identifies three stages of recognition, three vital components of identity formation, namely: self-confidence, self-esteem and self-worth. Self-confidence stems from relationships of love and friendship. Self-esteem is supported and developed by legally institutionalized relationships of general respect for people. Finally, self-worth comes from relationships in society and recognition. The researcher argues that they are achieved only through intersubjective recognition, through which we are recognized by others and we recognize them[30]. Thus, for a person's self-realization, the establishment of relationships of mutual recognition is important.

For A. Honneth, people's self-concept is not a single thing, but an intersubjective process in which one's own view of oneself becomes apparent together with the view of others of oneself. According to A. Honneth, self-confidence, the most important form of recognition, takes place in the relationships between children and their parents, in friendships and adult love relationships, because they are at the core of the relationship with oneself[31]. A. Honneth draws on the psychological theory of the American sociologist and philosopher George Herbert Mead to establish that children's relationships with parents and others have a profound impact on their development. The role that parents play in meeting the child's needs while at the same time allowing the child to develop independently is a clearly balanced, intersubjectively worked out between parents and child, leading to a "basic trust"[32]. This demonstrates how identity is transformed in the process of social development, as people learn to imagine themselves in terms of what A. Honneth calls the "generalized other"[33]. As they grow up and acquire values and norms, children become aware of their interactions with others. They begin to perceive themselves as members of their own social context of cooperation, and accordingly become members of a particular community.

The second aspect of recognition that A. Honneth outlines is self-respect, the respect that all people deserve because they are people. Legal rights provide the means by which this form of self-respect is best realized. This includes the ability of people to outline the moral and political laws that they adhere to[34].

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[29] Ibid. P. 69.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32]. Ibid. P. 76-77.
[33] Ibid. P. 78.
[34] Honneth A. Reification: A New Look at an Old Idea. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

The third stage of recognition, according to A. Honneth, is self-esteem, which requires the recognition of what distinguishes some people from others, the recognition of the differences and uniqueness of each person. Self-esteem and self-identity are interconnected. In this case, the scientist uses the term "solidarity" to describe the socio-cultural context in which a sense of self-worth arises on the basis of shared concern as an intersubjective value. A. Honneth states that people's full self-realization depends on sharing common values. It should be emphasized that self-respect and self-esteem, for the scholar, are two distinct stages of the moral development of the individual, related to rights and solidarity in society[35].

As far as solidarity is concerned, the scholars[36][37]argue that it is a multifaceted interdisciplinary phenomenon that has gone beyond the boundaries of sociology and political science, and is dynamically developing. The essence of the term "solidarity" (from the French *solidarite*) is based on the combination of such concepts as common interests, interconnectedness, unanimity, interdependence, and shared responsibility, implying the pooling of resources and capabilities of actors to achieve common goals while maintaining the interests of each of the subjects in balance with public interests. The phenomenon of solidarity encompasses moral, political, and sociocultural elements, which in turn are supported by one or another organizational infrastructure and its institutional factors. In his theory of social action, T. Parsons argues that a social system consists of individual subjects interacting with each other in a situation that has at least a physical or ecological aspect, that is, actors who are motivated by a tendency to optimize their activities and whose attitude to the situation is determined and mediated through a system of common culturally structured symbols[38]. In view of this, the prominent American sociologist interprets solidarity as an integral characteristic of society that maintains stability and is provided with an order of norms and values learned in the process of socialization[39]. From such positions, solidarity is defined as the free consolidated participation of people in public life, based on a conscious choice and a series of moral actions[40]. At the same time, solidarity acts as a tool for correcting injustice, reconciliation in conflict situations, and restoring disturbed social equilibrium.

[35] Ibid.

[36]Cureton A. Solidarity and Social Moral Rules. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*. 2012. Vol. 15, № 5. P. 691-707.

[37] Mirra C., Fedorenko S. Theoretical analysis of the concept "solidarity" and its reference to academic discourse. *Theoretical and Methodical Problems of Children and Youth Education*. 2023. Vol. 27, № 2. P. 72-81.

[38] Parsons T. American society: A theory of the societal community. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2007.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Cureton A. Solidarity and Social Moral Rules. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*. 2012. Vol. 15, № 5. P. 691-707.

In modern scientific discourse, the concept of "solidarity" is considered: firstly, as integration based on common interests of individuals, groups, as well as on interdependence and responsibility; secondly, as unity based on moral values, ethical obligations and care as a result of adherence to common norms and values; thirdly, as joint activity to achieve a certain goal in accordance with the principle of "one for all and all for one". The conscious nature of solidarity contributes to the fact that the normative foundations of any community, including educational ones, determine such social characteristics as the ability to be responsible and disciplined, as well as the compatibility of individual interests, feelings and experiences with the interests and feelings of others[41].

Thus, the social obligations underlying solidarity identify it with a sense of unity in the academic community in particular and society in general. In other words, true solidarity and its supporters not only seek pleasure and benefit, but also act on the basis of universal internal values and common norms of a certain community, including academic ones. Solidarity today has a more reflexive nature, assumes an active role of the individual in its formation, and is associated with the problems of improving society, while acting as a social value.

In turn, pedagogy of expanding opportunities and abilities or pedagogy of empowerment is a collective term for pedagogical approaches and practices that are used to encourage curiosity, self-reflection, self-knowledge, self-direction and self-affirmation of students. In particular, this pedagogical direction includes an approach based on abilities and opportunities and an approach of active involvement or participation (based on critical pedagogy and transformative learning). Participatory methods and tools can democratize the educational process, as well as the prospects for the personal development of students. It should be noted that this connection between personal development and participation was formulated in the Human Development Report in 2024, which emphasized that the greatest asset of modern society is "human uniqueness and the ability of people to cooperate"[42].

The pedagogical approach based on abilities and capabilities was first formulated in its current form by Amartya Sen in the 1990s. This approach outlines the main ideas of freedom and well-being, implemented in the concepts of abilities, the functioning of a person in society, his learning and upbringing through activity. A. Sen argues that education should be more about expanding individual freedom rather than focusing solely on economic progress as the primary goal of modern society[43].

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[41] Mirra C., Fedorenko S. Theoretical analysis of the concept "solidarity" and its reference to academic discourse. *Theoretical and Methodical Problems of Children and Youth Education.* 2023. Vol. 27, № 2. P. 74.

[42] UNDP. Human Development Report 2023/2024: Breaking the gridlock Reimagining cooperation in a polarized world. New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2024. P. vi.

[43] Sen A. K. Rationality and Freedom. Harvard University Press, 2002.

The development of modern education involves more than equal access to resources; it means expanding human opportunities, that is, the freedom that young people actually enjoy, choosing a life that they have every reason to value[44]. Young people should be able to make choices from a range of options that are important to them for a fulfilling life, now and in the future. From this perspective, choice is itself a valuable aspect of human life. As I. Robeyns explains, it is important that people have the freedom or opportunities and abilities, based on an appropriate value system, to lead the life they want to have, to do what they want to do, and to be who they want to be. Once they actually have these substantial opportunities, they will be able to choose the options they value most[45].

A. Sen considers it important not so much the achieved goals as the real opportunities and freedom that a person has to achieve these goals[46]. However, in matters related to the educational process, it also makes sense to analyze what has been achieved in different areas, and not only the manifestation of abilities and capabilities. The problem is that abilities often contradict the facts of what has been achieved, and in terms of pedagogy it may be necessary to evaluate what has already been implemented[47].

In general, the pedagogical approach based on abilities and capabilities, although broadly oriented towards justice, in contrast to critical pedagogy, due to its emphasis on the potential of human functioning, assumes freedom and plurality in choosing a life direction, which people should value[48]. In addition, A. Sen argues that since freedom is important, people have reason to ask what they should do to help each other protect or advance their freedoms[49]. From an educational perspective, this points to the importance of learning and education processes and the moral and ethical obligations of all participants in the educational process. It is important to note that the capabilities-based approach is not a theory of justice, it cannot explain injustice, inequality or well-being[50]. But it provides a framework for the development of capabilities that contribute to a decent life, the realization of personal potential and serves as a tool for conceptualizing inequality (lack of capabilities or deprivation of favorable conditions for the manifestation of capabilities) and well-being.

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[44] Sen A. K. Human Rights and Capabilities. *Journal of Human Development.* 2005. Vol. 6, № 2. P. 151-166.

[45] Robeyns I. Sen's Capability Approach and Gender Inequality: Selecting Relevant Capabilities. *Feminist Economic.* 2003. Vol. 9, № 2-3. P. 65.

[46] Sen A. K. Human Rights and Capabilities. *Journal of Human Development.* 2005. Vol. 6, № 2. P. 151-166.

[47] Sypnowich C. Cosmopolitans, Cosmopolitanism, and Human Flourishing. *The Political Philosophy of Cosmopolitanism.* 2005. P. 55-74.

[48] Nussbaum M. *Women and Human Development.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. P. 59.

[49] Sen A. K. Rationality and Freedom. Harvard University Press, 2002.

[50] Robeyns I. Sen's Capability Approach and Gender Inequality: Selecting Relevant Capabilities. *Feminist Economic.* 2003. Vol. 9, № 2-3. P. 67.

Among the core capabilities that M. Nussbaum identifies for a decent life, which she argues have "broad cross-cultural resonance and intuitive power", are: practical reason, control over one's own life environment and a critical attitude towards oneself and one's actions, as well as narrative imagination[51]. Firstly, it is the ability to critically analyze oneself and one's own life context, an "examined life", which requires a critical look at beliefs, traditions and habits, logical reasoning and checking ideas for consistency, correctness and accuracy of judgments as a democratic citizen[52].

Secondly, as M. Nussbaum argues, people must develop the ability to see themselves not only as belonging to a local community, but also as interconnected with all other people by bonds of recognition and concern in a global world[53].

Thirdly, it is the cultivation of a "narrative imagination," by which M. Nussbaum understands the ability to imagine oneself in the shoes of another person. In the researcher's deep conviction, people who have never learned to use reason and imagination to enter into a wider world of cultures, groups, and ideas will be impoverished personally and politically, no matter how successful their professional training[54]. Regarding the idea of abilities in a broader sense, M. Nussbaum argues that their threshold criterion is "the idea of human dignity," which includes the social foundations of self-respect, and therefore to some extent facilitates the development of a person's personal potential[55].

Transformational pedagogy provides students with the opportunity to critically analyze the different contexts of their life activities, beliefs, values, knowledge and attitudes in order to develop space for self-reflection, appreciation of diversity and critical thinking. It is known that the theory of transformational learning was initiated by the famous American sociologist and educator Jack Mezirow, when he studied adult women who returned to school[56]. J. Mezirow's longitudinal studies led him to the theory that adults do not apply their old understanding to new situations, but instead find that they need to pay attention to new perspectives in order to gain new understanding of things that are changing. J. Mezirow suggested that people have important learning opportunities related to their past experiences. The scholar found that critical reflection can lead to a transformation of understanding[57].

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[51] Nussbaum M. *Women and Human Development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. P. 72.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Nussbaum M. Cultivating Humanity. A classical defense of reform in liberal education. Harvard University Press, 1997. P. 10.

[54] Ibid. P.297.

[55] Nussbaum M. *Women and Human Development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. P. 292.

[56] Mezirow J. Education for perspective transformation: Women's re-entry programs in community colleges. New York: Teacher's College, Columbia University, 1978.

[57] Ibid.

Transformative learning is defined as the process of questioning one's assumptions, values, perspectives, and beliefs and making them more open and accessible[58]. According to J. Mezirow, transformative learning has two main strands: instrumental learning and communicative learning[59]. Instrumental learning focuses on task-oriented problem solving and the assessment of cause-and-effect relationships. Communicative learning focuses on how people communicate their feelings, needs, and desires. Both of these elements are important for transformative learning – learners must be able to focus on different types of their understanding and to review new perspectives that are both logical and emotional in order to challenge their previous understanding[60].

In general, transformative learning is when students who receive new information evaluate their past ideas and understandings through critical reflection, changing their worldview. Independent critical thinking is important for full participation in a democratic society, as well as for making moral and ethical decisions in various areas of life[61]. It goes beyond the simple process of acquiring knowledge and immerses itself in how students find meaning in their lives and understand themselves in this world. Such a learning experience involves a fundamental change in their perceptions – students begin to question everything they knew or thought before and explore things from new perspectives to make room for new ideas and information. At the same time, independent thinking is vital for full participation in a democratic society, as well as for making moral decisions in various areas of life[62].

Many educators agree that transformative learning leads to true freedom of thought and mutual understanding[63][64]. In this way, transformative education involves the creation of dynamic relationships between teachers, students and their shared body of knowledge, which to some extent contributes to the personal growth of students.

This education is not limited to the classroom, but seeks to contextualize problems with different places and people as subjects of the educational environment. A problem-based approach to learning involves active listening,

[58] Mezirow J. Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000.

[59] *Mezirow J. Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991.*

[60] Ibid.

[61] *Mezirow*, J. Transformative Learning Theory to Practice. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education.*1997. Vol. 74. P. 7.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Robertson D. L. Transformative learning and transition theory: Toward developing the ability to facilitate insight. *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching.*1997. Vol. 8, № 1. P. 105-125.

[64] Scott S. A way of seeing: transformation for a new century. *Contexts of Adult Education: Canadian Perspectives* / T. Fenwick, T. Nesbit, B. Spencer (Eds.). Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing Inc, 2006. P. 153-161.

dialogue, action and reflection. Transformative education requires active and interested students who ask critical questions and seek additional information from different sources, not only from educational literature. This information should then be placed in context and used, for example, to solve a specific problem.

Transformative learning is an element of high-quality open education and a crucial factor in sustainable development. It equips learners with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to address the interconnected global challenges facing humanity today, including climate change, environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, poverty and inequality. This fosters a sense of belonging to all humanity and helps young people become responsible and active global citizens in building inclusive, peaceful and sustainable societies. Transformative education only occurs when the educational environment encourages the use of critical reflection and different meaning structures – perspectives and schemas[65].

Meaning perspectives are represented by a wide range of predispositions, which are the result of psychocultural factors that determine people's horizons of expectation. J. Mezirow divides meaning perspectives into three main types: sociolinguistic, psychological and epistemic. The semantic scheme, in turn, is a complex combination of concepts, beliefs, judgments, and feelings that forms a certain interpretation[66].

Semantic structures become understandable through reflection, which also ensures their successful development. Thanks to reflective thinking, according to Mezirow, people are capable of deeper self-knowledge and, at the same time, a deeper understanding of the process of self-learning and self-education[67].

Among the factors of the educational process that contribute to transformational learning and education, including in the civic aspect, this American educator singles out[68]:

1) trusting and supportive relationships that develop when students have a common goal and cooperate in its implementation;

2) challenging assumptions based on open-ended questions to students and solving complex dilemmas during active interaction with others. Students are encouraged to question certain facts of reality, openly reflect on and share their ideas, which helps to change their perspectives. This contributes to the development of critical thinking skills that help students connect new knowledge to their own life experiences (for example, using blogs and various social tools for online discussions);

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[65] Mezirow J. Transformative learning theory understanding and promoting transformative learning: A guide for educators of adults. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1994.

[66] Ibid. P. 223.

[67] *Mezirow J. Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991.*

[68] Ibid.

3) meaningful experiences, i.e., gaining direct practical experience, which also involves planning a sequence of actions to achieve a common goal;

4) self-awareness and readiness to leave the comfort zone in the process of solving a complex task in order to gain new experience.

Examples of transformational learning and education are as follows:

– life-changing events, such as starting college;

– solving a difficult dilemma with subsequent critical reflection;

– diverse cultural experiences that help broaden one's worldview, as well as develop empathy and appreciation for cultural diversity;

– journaling as a way of critically examining assumptions and dispelling unconscious biases, etc.[69].

In general, transformative education empowers students to think independently, which allows them to develop their own sense of meaning in a world free from the beliefs, judgments, and values that exist in their lives from their cultures, religions, and family beliefs. Independent thinking is vital for full participation in a democratic society and for making moral decisions in various areas of life[70]. Therefore, the goal of higher education is to develop students' independent critical thinking[71].

Thus, transformative education highlights and substantiates students' cultural identity, helping them acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to function effectively in the cultural environment of the nation, as well as to challenge racial, social-class, and gender inequalities. This helps students develop the decision-making and social action skills needed to identify problems in society, understand their values, and take the necessary measures to enhance democracy and social justice in their communities, the state, and the world at large. Transformative education enables students to become both successful citizens and agents of change.

Today, higher education institutions educate students who must be able to learn throughout their lives and effectively and creatively apply the acquired skills and competencies to new situations in an ever-changing, complex world[72]. Therefore, according to many educators, pedagogical, even andragogic, technologies are no longer fully sufficient to prepare students for successful professional activities in the future[73],[74].

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[69] Mezirow J. Transformative learning theory understanding and promoting transformative learning: A guide for educators of adults. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1994.

[70] *Mezirow*, J. Transformative Learning Theory to Practice. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education.*1997. P. 7.

[71] Ibid. P. 5.

[72] Kuit J. A., Fell A. Web 2.0 to pedagogy 2.0: A social-constructivist approach to learning enhanced by technology. *Critical design and effective tools for e-learning in higher education: Theory into practice*. IGI Global, 2010. P. 310-325.

[73] Ashton J., Newman L. An unfinished symphony: 21st century teacher education using knowledge creating heutagogies. *British Journal of Educational Technology. 2006. Vol. 37, № 6.* P. 825-840.

[74] Merriam S. B. Andragogy and self-directed learning: Pillars of adult learning theory. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education. 2001. Vol. 89.* P. 3-13

What is needed is an approach to the educational process that involves a greater focus on self-learning of students. Changes in the educational vector towards distance learning and teaching certain courses based on blended learning with the involvement of the latest technologies require the transition of the pedagogy of engagement into the virtual space[75].

The rapid development of information technologies and, with them, distance education have also created a need to consider new pedagogical approaches to learning and education, among which self-determined learning is gaining increasing popularity, which formed the basis for the development of heutagogy. This pedagogy applies a holistic approach to the development of metacognitive abilities of students, who act as the main agents of their own learning and education, which occurs as a result of personal experience[76].

The basis of heutagogy is the so-called "double-loop learning" and self-reflection[77]. During "double-loop learning", in addition to thinking about the problem-solving process and the solution itself, students also consider how this solution process affects their own beliefs and actions, questioning and examining their own values and assumptions to improve their learning, that is, improving their metacognitive abilities[78]. In the process of such a double-loop learning, students learn more about their learning style and can easily adapt new learning situations to their learning styles. Due to the dual focus on competencies and metacognitive abilities, heutagogy ensures, in a certain way, the successful outcome of the educational process in higher education.

According to the theory of heutagogy, self-directed and autonomous students demonstrate clearly expressed: self-efficacy about how to learn, based on constant reflection on their own learning process and self-education; communication and collaboration skills; creativity, especially in applying competencies in new and unfamiliar situations, as well as through flexible and critical thinking; positive attitudes towards educational material and different learning situations[79].

Heutagogy has been identified as a potential theory for the application of new technologies in distance education[80]. It is the achievements of this pedagogical theory that have come in handy in the current conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, which require a symbiosis of technology and distance learning in higher education institutions. COVID-19 pandemic has put a

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[75] Waldner L. S. eService-learning: Breaking through the barrier. *eService-learning: Creating experiential learning and civic engagement through online and hybrid courses* / J. Strait, K. J. Nordyke (Eds.). Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2015. P. 20-39.

[76] Hase S., Kenyon C. Heutagogy: A child of complexity theory. *Complicity: An International Journal of Complexity and Education. 2007. Vol. 4, № 1. P. 112.*

[77] Ibid.

[78] Hase S. Heutagogy and e-learning in the workplace: Some challenges and opportunities. *Impact: Journal of Applied Research in Workplace E-learning. 2009. Vol. 1, № 1. P. 45.*

[79] Hase S., Kenyon C. Heutagogy: A child of complexity theory. *Complicity: An International Journal of Complexity and Education. 2007. Vol. 4, № 1. P. 111-119.*

[80] Hase S. Heutagogy and e-learning in the workplace: Some challenges and opportunities. *Impact: Journal of Applied Research in Workplace E-learning. 2009. Vol. 1, № 1. P. 43-52.*

significant challenge regarding "online learning as the primary medium of the learning process"[81]. Distance education as a separate form of learning both requires and promotes the development of student autonomy, which is central to self-determined learning[82]. Since student autonomy is characteristic and promoted in distance learning environments, which inherently support the practice of heutagogy. In other words, hyutagogy undertakes the search for answers to questions related to the development of human potential, which previous studies and scientific theories could not answer. As an example, the authors of the concept cite the situation with distance learning, noting that, despite the flexibility of the forms offered to the learner, as studies show, distance learning remains centered on the teacher and not on the student. Individual education plans based on the competence approach are given as an example of the organization of training, opposed to the second model, in which "people with potential" are able to manage their own learning. Heutagogy recognizes the need for a flexible approach to learning, in which the teacher provides resources, but the student himself/hersrlf develops the actual course, which he/she could master by negotiating with the teacher. Thus, the student can view critical articles, reviews, questions and choose what is of interest and value to him, and then discuss further possible reading materials and necessary tasks. In this situation, assessment becomes more a means of educational experience than measurement of achievement. Heutagogy begins with the fact that the student takes responsibility for his own learning [83].

In practice, heutagogy relies on the Internet and social media, which encourage interaction, dialogic reflection, collaboration, and information sharing, and also promote the development of autonomy. In particular, the creation of content generated by students supports the development of cognitive and metacognitive skills. Whereas passive use and/or consumption of information is less effective in supporting the development of these skills[84].

Autonomy, in turn, provides a person with the ability to self-direct and self-initiative activity. Conative ability is defined as the enduring disposition to strive[85]. Will is a vital part of the development of human resources, which gives the direction and scale of the individual's potential. Opportunities are never realized by themselves, this happens only through the activity of the subject, who

[81] Fedorenko S., Kolomiiets S., Antonenko I., Guryeyeva L., Tsepkalo O. COVID-19 Impact on Media Education in Technical University. Amazonia Investiga, 2021. *Vol. 10, № 47.* P. 152.

[82] Peters O. *Learning and teaching in distance education: Analyses and interpretations from an international perspective.* London: Kogan Page, 2001.

[83] Hase S., Kenyon C. From andragogy to heutagogy. *UltiBase Articles.* 2000. Vol. 1. P. 5-10. URL: http://ultibase.rmit.edu.au/Articles/dec00/hase2.htm

[84] Blaschke L. M., Porto S., Kurtz G. Assessing the added value of Web 2.0 tools for e-learning: The MDE experience. *Proceedings of the European Distance and E-learning Network (EDEN) Research Workshop*, October 25-27, 2010. Budapest, Hungary, 2010

[85] Brophy J. Synthesis of Research on Strategies for Motivating Students to Learn. *Educational Leadership.* 1987. Vol. 45. P. 40.

perceives them as opportunities for himself, chooses one of them and makes his choice, investing his resources in the implementation of the chosen opportunity. The subject takes responsibility for the implementation of a certain opportunity, that is, an internal obligation to himself to make efforts for its implementation. This is the process of embodying the opportunity in actions in practice according to the following formula "possible – valuable (meaningful) – goal – action"[86].

Since personal potential is formed in joint activities with other people, an integral part of this component is social intelligence (manifested in the ability to form a person's attitude towards himself/herself, predict the results of his activities, understand his/her behavior and the behavior of others, and also provides for successful social adaptation and the ability to establish and maintain good relationships with other people) and social skills, including[87]:

– interpersonal skills (they are used every day, including interacting with other people, both individually and in groups. People with strong interpersonal skills achieve success in their professional and personal lives. Interpersonal skills are more focused on communicating, listening, asking questions, and understanding body language. They are also related to emotional intelligence, or the ability to understand one's own emotions and the emotions of other people);

– leadership skills (their development encourages individual as well as collective achievements; motivates to achieve success; helps a person realize their ambitions and, to some extent, forces them to work hard to achieve their goals);

– communication skills (one of the important aspects, despite the others, which contributes to the effective development of personal potential is the ability to convey one's thoughts and feelings to others).

Regarding the last of the above skills, the ability to accurately and clearly convey information is an important life skill in today's changing world of continuous information flows. In his book "Utilize your personal potential" (Danish: *Udnyt Dit Personlige Potentiale*), Danish psychologist and educator Finn Havaleschka provides effective tools for developing personal potential that help to understand oneself and, last but not least, others. The Danish scholar is convinced that a person's sphere of attention should be social, focused on self-development and self-affirmation, which makes them wiser about themselves, their lives and other people. In this process, one of the key roles is played by communication skills[88].

In general, all of the above ensures a person's purposeful activity in achieving the goal; his/her ability to self-development and the ability to find appropriate ways of self-expression and realization of existing potential; the

[86] Heckhausen H., Kuhl J. From wishes to action: The dead ends and short cuts on the long way to action. *ED Goal directed behavior: The concept of action in psychology* / M. Frese & J. Sabini (Eds.). Hillsdale: Erlbaum, 1985. P. 134-159.

[87] Бондаренко О. Особистісний потенціал як психолого-педагогічна проблема. *Advanced Linguistics*. 2023. Vol. 11. P. 123-128.

[88] Havaleschka F. *Udnyt Dit Personlige Potentiale.* Farlog, 2015.

ability to self-esteem. As for the latter, its level is largely related to the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of a person with himself, his activities, which arises as a result of achieving success or failure. The combination of life successes and failures, the predominance of one over the other gradually form the self-esteem of the individual. The features of the self-esteem of the individual are expressed in the goals and general direction of a person's activities, since in activities he, as a rule, strives to achieve such results that are consistent with his self-esteem, self-regulation of his/her behavior, in a certain way contributing to his self-realization.

## CONCLUSIONS

Summing up, we can conclude that an interrelated unity of the humanistic approach to education (takes into account a person's desire for constant self-development, self-improvement as an immanent essence of the individual), the concept of Bildung (involves a process of harmonious personal development through interaction with others and with the surrounding world in general), the theory of recignition (encompasses three vital components of identity formation – self-confidence, self-esteem and self-worth and is based on the presumption of a shared community in which identity is formed, projected, constructed and understood), the pedagogy of empowerment (provides a basis for the development of abilities that contribute to a decent life through the realization of personal potential), heutagogy (allows an individual approach to the choice of ways and means of professional and personal self-development) and transformational pedagogy (provides students with the opportunity to critically analyze different contexts of their life activities, beliefs, values, knowledge and attitudes to create favorable conditions for self-knowledge and self-improvement) serves as a scientific and pedagogical basis to encourage the organization of a successful educational process with a particular emphasis on personal self-enhancement of Scandinavian students.

The aforementioned theoretical complex ensures: a comprehensive approach to students' harmonious development; the process of self-recognition based on the understanding of intellectual and moral qualities; development of students' ability to bring constructive changes in all areas of their lives, based on humanistic values and attitudes at the same time; the process of realizing individual intellectual, social and creative potentials, manifested in proactive choices of creative-rational solutions to problems; development of students' ability to take important decisions and control their individual self-enhancement; constructive dialogue between all participants in the educational process, as well as between students and the community, where the dialogue serves as a tool for self-realization.

## SUMMARY

The paper focuses on the complex theoretical basis which is at the core of organizing the educational process of higher education institutions in

Scandinavian countries. It highlights the interrelated unity of the humanistic approach to education, the concept of Bildung, the theory of recignition, the pedagogy of empowerment, heutagogy and transformational pedagogy, which serve as a scientific and pedagogical basis to encourage the organization of a successful educational process with a particular emphasis on personal self-knowledge and self-enhancement of students in the Scandinavian higher education. It is stated that the theoretical complex under study ensures:the process of self-recognition based on the understanding of intellectual and moral qualities; development of students' ability to bring constructive changes in all areas of their lives, based on humanistic values and attitudes at the same time; the process of realizing individual intellectual, social and creative potentials, manifested in proactive choices of creative-rational solutions to problems; development of students' ability to take important decisions and control their individual self-enhancement; constructive dialogue between all participants in the educational process, as well as between students and the community, where the dialogue serves as a tool for self-realization

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