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**PRAGMATISM IN PHILOSOPHY OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION STUDIES
AND PROBLEMS OF TEACHER TRAINING¹**

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Abstract

The article analyzes the essence and content of philosophical, psychological and pedagogical aspects of classical pragmatism and neopragmatism. The studies of texts by American scholars Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, John Dewey have proved that the founders of pragmatism set out to substantiate a scientific method that would actively contribute to the versatile knowledge of human beings as well as their physical, psychological, social, mental and moral abilities. Charles Pierce, basing this method on two main principles: 1) a principle of doubt and belief and 2) a principle of meaning, argued that a person, who remains in constant unrest and uneasiness should get rid of these "persecutors", overcome doubt and move on to a mental balance, peace of mind and happiness. Undoubtedly, this idea has relevance for children with special needs who, being acutely affected by their condition, sometimes fell into despair due to insufficient opportunities for self-realization. The way out of these states can, in the opinion of representatives of pragmatism, be found with the help of life experience, which is acquired by intellectual activities.

¹ The result of the article was a comparative study "The Philosophical Foundations of the Researches of the Inclusive Education. Problems of teacher training" (2017-2021). The research was funded by the authors.

Keywords

Pragmatism – Inclusive education – Personality of a teacher – Thinking – Pedagogical activity

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Introducción

Over the past two centuries, education and science have become determining factors in the development of an individual and society. Nowadays their role is growing steadily and it is likely that this trend will gain even more dynamism. Culture and civilization-driven processes determine directly appearance and development of the latest information technologies and meaningful use of technical achievements of humanity². This path has already certain risks embedded primarily connected with outcomes of technocratic thinking, deformation of the higher emotional sphere of human, more potent manifestations of aggression and violence. The gift of kindness, love, mercy, conscience, honor and help towards our neighbor is lost by a significant number of people on the planet Earth. The growth of crisis phenomena in society is, in our opinion, not so much of an economic nature as a decline of spiritual and human values. These factors affect negatively the attitude towards children with special needs, who require constant informal attention and care of parents, teachers, public and religious institutions. The reality of life itself raised the question of introduction of inclusive education, especially in the recent decade. In this aspect, we observe a tendency for social and / or personal rejection of the idea of teaching children with disabilities in local regular schools³. The last decades showed significant improvement and progress of inclusion in the USA, Finland, Japan, Canada. However, concerning the latter, the effectiveness of inclusive education in different Canadian provinces is not always high. Though the overwhelming majority of citizens of the country endorse the idea of inclusion and understand the importance of socializing "special" students and forming a tolerant attitude towards them, the significant proportion of population still support traditional segregation approaches towards teaching students with mental and physical disorders⁴. For example, in the Czech Republic, society accepted integration of persons with disabilities in ordinary schools and introduction of inclusive education with mixed and sometimes hostile feelings. "The resistance to inclusive education may be inferred also from the knowledge of the population's social mentality, which is more oriented to exclusion of differences in the broadest sense than their inclusion into the social mainstream"⁵. These issues are largely relevant for the post-Soviet countries. Each country, either on its own or with supports, therefore needs to chart its own path toward inclusion based on its societal values, education legislation, and available supports⁶.

Hence, nowadays there is a problem of quality education for persons with special needs. It requires constant planned activities for providing efficient and effective psychological and pedagogical support for those students and their parents.

² O. Budnyk & M. Kotyk, "Use of Information and Communication Technologies in the Inclusive Process of Educational Institutions", *Journal of Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University*, Vol: 7 num 1 (2020): 15-23. DOI: 10.15330/jpnu.7.1.15-23.

³ P. Croll & D. Moses, "Pragmatism, Ideology and Educational Change: The Case of Special Educational Needs", *British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol: 46 num 1 (1998): 11-25.

⁴ W. E. Lyons, S. A. Thompson & V. Timmons, "We are inclusive. We are a team. Let's just do it': commitment, collective efficacy, and agency in four inclusive schools", *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, Vol: 20 num 8 (2016): 889-907. doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2015.1122841.

⁵ R. Sabo; K. Vančíková; T. Vaníková & D. Šukolová, "Social Representations of Inclusive School from the Point of View of Slovak Education Actors", *The New Educational Review*, Vol: 54 (2018): 248.

⁶ R. Tichá; B. Abery & L. Kincade, "Educational practices and strategies that promote inclusion: Examples from the U.S.", *Sociální pedagogika / Social Education*, Vol: 6 num 2 (2018): 43-62. <https://doi.org/10.7441/soced.2018.06.02.03>.

Therefore, we consider the philosophy of pragmatism to be expedient to apply while studying the outlined problem⁷.

Pragmatism as an influential philosophical, psychological and pedagogical theory was originated in the works by William James⁸, John Dewey⁹, Charles Peirce¹⁰, Ferdinand Schiller¹¹, David Leslie Murray¹², Hans Joas¹³. Modern scholars studied pragmatism through the prism of Anglo-American and European way of thinking: Scot Danforth¹⁴, Richard Rorty¹⁵, etc. International historiography of psychological and pedagogical orientation mostly viewed pragmatism in the light of philosophy of education, reforming systems of management, content, forms, technologies of teaching, as well as improvement and creation of a new cultural and educational environment: Vitaliy Bondar¹⁶, Paul Croll & Diana Moses¹⁷, Penny Tassoni¹⁸, Rena Ticha, Brian Aberly & Laurie Kincade¹⁹, etc. For example, S. Danforth explains and utilizes a philosophy of pragmatism in the evaluation of three models of disability used in disability research and services. The three models are: (1) the functional limitations model, (2) the minority group model, and (3) the social construction model²⁰.

Noting the quality level of research into a phenomenon of philosophical, psychological and pedagogical pragmatism, it is worth mentioning insufficient study of the possibilities, role and place of pragmatism in the context of scientific research related to the real state and development of inclusive education. Thus there has arisen a demand for the specific study.

The aim of the article is to define a methodological role of theory of pragmatism in the process of studying the state and development of modern inclusive education basing on the analysis of authentic sources.

⁷ H. Vasianovych & O. Budnyk, "The Philosophical Foundations of the Researches of the Inclusive Education", Journal of Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University, Vol: 6 num 1 (2019): 9-18. DOI: 10.15330/jpnu.6.1.9-18.

⁸ W. James, Psychology. Briefer Course (New York: Henry Holt, 1910).

⁹ J. Dewey, Experience and Nature (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co, 1925).

¹⁰ Ch. S. Pierce, How to Make Our Ideas Clear (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard UP, 1958).

¹¹ F. C. S. Schiller, "Axioms as Postulates," in Personal Idealism, edited by Henry Sturt (London: Macmillan and Co. 1902), 47-133.

¹² D. L. Murray, Pragmatism (New York: Dodge Publishing, 1912).

¹³ H. Joas, "American Pragmatism and German Thought," in Pragmatism and Social Theory (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 94-121.

¹⁴ S. Danforth, "Pragmatism and the Scientific Validation of Professional Practices in American Special Education", Disability & Society, Vol: 14 num 6 (1999): 733-751. DOI: 10.1080/09687599925867.

¹⁵ R. Rorty, The Linguistic Turn Recent Essays in Philosophic Method (Chicago UP, 1992).

¹⁶ V. Bondar, "Inclusive education as a socio-pedagogical phenomenon", Ridna shkola, Vol: 3 (2011): 10-14.

¹⁷ P. Croll & D. Moses, "Pragmatism, Ideology and Educational Change: The Case of Special Educational Needs", British Journal of Educational Studies, Vol: 46 num 1 (1998): 11-25.

¹⁸ P. Tassoni, Supporting children with special needs: handbook (London: Hodder Education, 2015).

¹⁹ R. Tichá, B. Aberly & L. Kincade, "Educational practices and strategies that promote inclusion: Examples from the U.S.", Sociální pedagogika / Social Education, Vol: 6 num 2 (2018): 43-62. <https://doi.org/10.7441/soced.2018.06.02.03>.

²⁰ S. Danforth, "A Pragmatic Evaluation of Three Models of Disability in Special Education", Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities, Vol: 13 num 4 (2001): 344.

Methods of research

Philosophical method of research allowed to study the essence of a person with special needs, view his/her as the highest value, and at the same time realize that his world is incomplete and requires constant spiritual enrichment and perfection. As a universal method, it directed the research at looking for contradictions that exist in the system of inclusive education, as well as finding ways to solve them. The philosophical method of research was supplemented by general scientific and specific scientific methods.

Bibliographic method was used to study bibliographic catalogs, directories, information resources, and primary sources directly and indirectly related to lives and works of Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, John Dewey, Richard Rorty and others.

Historical and logical methods allowed to reveal the creative achievements of the leading representatives of theory of pragmatism at the interdisciplinary level; to understand that all known truths are relative, changing, and therefore need to be reviewed and re-evaluated.

Method of qualimetry was used to study the relationship of qualitative and quantitative characteristics of consciousness and identity of an individual, taking into account an ability of acquiring life and professional experience.

Method of content analysis was directed at the analysis and synthesis of the content of learning, real conditions of life for children with special needs, their spiritual and mental needs, possibilities of adaptation to educational environment.

Results and Discussion

The principle of active human action has been studied in different ways by various philosophical trends. Nevertheless, none of them paid as much attention to it as pragmatism (etymologically, the term “pragmatism” comes from the word “deed”, “action”)²¹. The philosophy of action was initiated in the 1870s by Charles Sanders Peirce, an American scientist who had diverse scientific interests and achievements (chemistry, astronomy, geodesy, mathematics, logic, language among them). He formulated the main idea of pragmatism, according to which reality or truth is determined not by the decision of an individual or a group of people, but by a system of “checks and balances”²². It should be noted that this idea has received significant development and actual application in theory and practice.

Peirce formulated two main theoretical positions of his teaching: 1) doubt – belief, 2) meaning. As for the first, the thinker let his thought follow a certain scheme: a person as an “interested subject” is constantly in a state of doubt, uncertainty, unrest, anxiety. From a point of view of psychology, this is a very unpleasant feeling, and it is therefore explainable that a person tends to abandon this state and arrive at a state of calmness and mental equilibrium²³.

²¹ M. A. Mozheyko, “Pragmatism”, in History of Philosophy: Encyclopedia (Minsk: Interpresservis: Knizhnyiy Dom, 2002), 827.

²² Ch. S. Pierce, How to Make Our Ideas Clear (Cambridge Mass: Harvard UP, 1958), 315.

²³ Ch. S. Pierce, How to Make Our Ideas Clear (Cambridge Mass: Harvard UP, 1958).

This idea has been previously articulated by Ukrainian philosopher and educator Hryhoriy Skovoroda, who emphasized that a person's happiness lies in peace of mind and self-knowledge. Pondering on this, he wrote: "That is what it means to be happy – to know yourself, that is, your own nature, to take up your destiny and be related to our collective duty"²⁴. Speaking about people who have certain illnesses or disabilities in "The conversation of five travelers about true happiness in life," the thinker emphasized that the merciful and caring mother – the Nature opened the way to happiness to all without exception²⁵. This state does not come on its own – one has to adjust thinking to action to reach it. Only steady belief that is formed on the basis of thinking grows into a habit of active endeavor to achieve goals. It should be noted that thinking according to Charles Peirce is, on the one hand, a kind of adaptive activity of a body, on the other hand, this adaptive feature is in opposition to a cognitive function. That gives grounds to speculate that thinking is considered by the scholar to be an active endeavor, aimed solely at regulation of relationships between the person and environment and at meeting its adaptive needs rather than at conceptual reflection of the environment. Since the subject lives in different situations, then his/her actions primarily depend on real situations. A researcher should choose the right method to obtain the most reliable study results of why the subject acted exactly like that, and not otherwise in a particular situation.

Peirce distinguished four methods, how people can set their beliefs: a) method of tenacity; b) method of authority; c) a priori method; d) method of science. If the first three are largely unreliable, the fourth method of science can be considered reliable and valid. Approaching the truth, says the scholar, is a process of continuous elimination of errors, improvement of hypotheses, updating of results²⁶.

As for the theory of meaning, the philosopher justified it in the sense of concepts or ideas that contribute to the knowledge of truth. In the context of the ideas of Peirce, truth as well as thinking is defined outside the relation to objective reality, only as a state of consciousness, as that the subject believes in, it is a successful, beneficial action. Moreover, the emphasis here is laid on the meanings and practical consequences that have one or another concept for a particular subject, which applies it in its activities. Since the consequences trigger a person's feelings, the outcome of his/her activities is psychological satisfaction and enjoyment. Human activity according to Peirce is manifested in a joint communication, without which a person cannot be happy and cheerful. Practice proves that this idea is correct, especially with regard to children who are deprived of the joy of communication, hence we talk about inclusion and development of a positive attitude towards such children and inclusive education in general, notes Tim Lorman²⁷.

Since human thinking is composed of signs, then the communicative situation manifests itself in three main components: a sign (the first component); a function of an object (the second component), an object that manifests itself in a certain relation to an interpreter (the third component). Considering the relationship between a sign and an

²⁴ H. Skovoroda, "A talk called alphabet or the ABC of the world", in *The ABC of the world: a book for family reading*, ed. L. Ushkalova. (Kharkiv: Knyzhkovyi Klub "Klub Simeinoho Dozvillia", 2015), 67.

²⁵ H. Skovoroda, "The conversation of five travelers about true happiness in life", in *Garden of songs*, transl. M. Zerov, P. Pelekh & V. Shevchuk (Kyiv: Veselka. 1983), 123.

²⁶ Ch. S. Peirce, *How to Make Our Ideas Clear* (Cambridge Mass: Harvard UP, 1958).

²⁷ T. Lorman, "Seven pillars of inclusive education. How to switch from the "why" to the "how" question?", *Defectology*, Vol. 3 (2010): 4-5.

object that it represents, Peirce defines the following types of these relationships: a sign as an icon (for example, a picture); a sign as an index (a signal); a sign as a symbol (a book).

A sign as a symbol, signals the subject about some other reality than the subject perceives it at that time, hence the symbol is a sign that has many different meanings. According to Peirce, the ability to recognize and decipher the use of one or another symbol that is hidden by a sign means to understand a person and a situation in which he/she is located. Children with special needs live in a variety of symbols and signs that have their meanings, their essential capacity, which should be well understood by the teacher, mentor, educator; without this understanding his/her work cannot be effective²⁸.

Symbols exist in certain images and meanings. A subject can comprehend and understand the meaning (word-form) by identifying possible consequences of its application in one way or another for person's real life behavior, therefore, it can be determined by fixing the experimental effects. The latter can be potentially reduced to possible actions. According to Peirce, we learn the subject of our thought, considering those properties that are likely to have practical meaning. Our perception of these properties forms the whole meaning of a particular subject (so-called "*Peirce maxim*" or "*pragmatic maxim*")²⁹. It leads us to the fact that the truth according to Peirce receives the status of "feasibility", and on this basis reveals the depth of the outlook of the philosopher, which is now specifically used in the analysis of the methodology of activity. William James, describing "the principle of Pierce," which has been formulated in the article entitled "How to make our ideas clear" wrote:

"... in order to achieve a complete understanding of our thoughts on any object, we need only consider what practical implications are contained in this object, therefore, what feelings we can expect from it and which our reactions we should be aware of. Our perception of these consequences, both immediate and distant, is all that we can imagine about this object, because in general this perception has every positive meaning. In this lies Peirce principle or the principle of pragmatism"³⁰.

It is worth mentioning that Charles Peirce outlined only the basic principles of pragmatism. This theory enjoyed more thorough development at the level of wide outlook by William James and John Dewey. James' special role in this matter was that he revealed the possibility of a principle of doubt-belief in solving psychological, religious and moral problems. Thanks to William James' efforts, pragmatism became an imminent American philosophic school at the beginning of the 1920's. This role of pragmatism was determined by the fact that it rejected abstract solutions of real human problems and closed systems as ineffective and adhered to specificity and adequacy of facts and deeds³¹. This meant the priority of empiricism over rationalism, and freedom and possibility over a dogmatic claim to absolute truth. Pragmatism does not seek any particular result, it is only a method³².

²⁸ V. Bondar, "Inclusive education as a socio-pedagogical phenomenon", *Ridna shkola*, Vol: 3 (2011): 10-14.

²⁹ Ch. S. Pierce, *How to Make Our Ideas Clear* (Cambridge Mass: Harvard UP, 1958).

³⁰ W. James, *Pragmatism*, transl. P. Yushkevych (Kyiv: Ukraine, 1995), 26-27.

³¹ H. Vasianovych & O. Budnyk, "The Category of freedom in the written heritage of John Amos Comenius and Hryhoriy Skovoroda", *Advanced Education*, num 7 (2017): 85-89. DOI: 10.20535/2410-8286.93517.

³² W James, *Pragmatism*, transl. P. Yushkevych (Kyiv: Ukraine, 1995), 26.

A person with experiences, problems, aspirations, concerns, etc. is placed in the center of philosophy of pragmatism. James' positive attitude to life is that he recommended to address any problem from the standpoint of interests of a particular person and demonstrated the absolute necessity of its continuous development, because such "... is a unique odor of individuality"³³. The philosopher denied destructive power of ideological absolutism and authoritarianism. According to him, the American-style democracy is a social dimension of pluralistic pragmatism; namely, his pragmatism, based on the values of a citizen of a democratic society, is the unity of religious intuition, philosophical knowledge and relevant political ideology. The truth of these words is confirmed by history: in the past soviet authoritarian society ruled by inhuman ideology, even a completely healthy person, not mentioning a person with special needs, was deprived of right and humane attitude. Therefore, any idea of inclusive education was out of the question.

Applying a pragmatic approach to a professional activity in the field of inclusion allows to "focus our sights on how ideas serve as the immediate conceptual precursors to practice, the leaping-off points for special education educators, service providers, and others who take action within the lives of persons with disabilities. We also focus on how professional efforts can serve democracy."³⁴

Among various issues that draws attention of representatives of philosophical pragmatism there is a problem of correlation of experience and function of consciousness of a subject. Human activity takes place on the basis of goal-setting, certain interest and use. Therefore, consciousness, as a "continuous stream," is capable of performing its functional role, when it is "selectively active" to a higher degree. From the most basic sensations and ascending towards abstract thinking, consciousness carries out the selection of what a particular individual urgently needs for his life, what meet his needs, demands, goals. It is worth noting that a child with special educational needs often has difficulties determining purpose-setting, needs, especially spiritual ones. It is likely that this child's "stream of consciousness" may be interrupted and be of a discrete character.

Theorists of pragmatism complement a psycho-pedagogical snapshot of a problem of the opposition "experience – consciousness" with a philosophical one. Here the idea of "radical empiricism" is constituted. The world is a single entity, and it is built on experience, that is, reality. The essence of "radical empiricism" lies in the fact, theorists of pragmatism emphasize, that this "flow of sensory experience" includes not only the feelings themselves, but also any experiences and connections occurring between them. As far as abstract concepts and ideas are concerned, they certainly have to return to the sensory experience and get it meaning in it. The methods of theoretical thinking are the usual ways of treating the experiences, so that they can again lead to new experiences and feelings. The action itself is just a way to get the desired experiences. Besides, "radical empiricism" must take into account the totality of the previous truths, which each researcher must consider. In this sense, there is a problem of truth. How is it interpreted in the theory of William James?

The philosopher emphasized that the ideas that are part of our experience become true when they help to connect with other elements of experience, to master it by a means

³³ W. James, *Pragmatism*, transl. P. Yushkevych (Kyiv: Ukraine, 1995), 21-22.

³⁴ S. Danforth, "A Pragmatic Evaluation of Three Models of Disability in Special Education", *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities*, Vol. 13 num 4 (2001): 344.

of conceptual schemes and programs. Consequently, the truth is a process of verifying the knowledge gained by an individual in the context of real social efficiency; it shows the inner world of a person that is never complete. It depends on person and on his/her will efforts how a person imagines it and what he/she does with this world. On this basis, the truth is formed, which becomes valuable when it brings benefit and satisfaction to a person. The whole point of truth is in successfully leading us from one component of experience to another³⁵. We create the realities of the past, “designing past eternity, modern human ways of thinking”.

According to James, consciousness is dismembered and has an arbitrary structure. People, being in different situations, are therefore doomed to make decisions for which there is no sufficient theoretical justification. The absence of choice as well as action is also a decision, no matter what it is. It is worth adding in this sense that not only students with special needs, but also teachers and mentors are often remain in such situations, as argued convincingly by J. Deppler, T. Lorman, U. Sharma³⁶.

The development of philosophical and pedagogical pragmatism was greatly influenced by American scholar John Dewey. Like his predecessors in the theory of pragmatism, Dewey considered “experience,” which encompasses not only the sphere of the conscious but also the unconscious to be a fundamental notion. The philosopher avoided exact wording, as, by the way, he did in other cases. Instead, the scientist listed those components that are part of this concept. Such “set” of components is too diverse: ranging from the most complex social processes to purely natural ones. From the context of his reasoning, it becomes obvious that all these components of the concept the “experience” combines by the fact of consciousness. It is in the consciousness that they occupy an identical place. In other words, it can be assumed that the concept of “experience” in the interpretation of Dewey has assumed its status in the unique experience of the subject, its habits and skills. In the epistemological sense, this approach can be qualified as a pure “stream of consciousness.” At first glance, the concept of “experience” in the interpretation of John Dewey is the same as that of William James. However, a more detailed analysis reveals a certain difference. Its essence lies in the fact that Dewey gave his concept much more dynamism and acceleration, which are actively included in the life of a person (of course, the justification only happened on a subjective level). In addition, the thinker constantly emphasized the need to improve the experience, its development, that is, a consistent and steady growth. It is worth noting another point: although the concept of “experience” in Dewey’s opinion is universal, yet its content is limited to a range of psychological, political, emotional, moral and pedagogical relations between subjects of an action. Whereas the example of the experience for William James is a religious experience, then for John Dewey this is a moral-political experience. It is the type that determines the meaning of human activity. The philosopher wrote anxiously about a significant gap between two important forms or types of human activity, that is their experience. On the one hand, it is science that displays amazing achievements in practice. On the other hand, it is social life: material contradictions, wars, conflicts, growing human aggression, physical and spiritual demoralization. The result of this situation is the neglect of human values, moral norms and ideals leading to nihilism, anxiety, misery. Thus, a person with special needs or disabilities faces social, mental and spiritual problems that often bring additional sufferings.

³⁵ W. James, *Pragmatism*, transl. P. Yushkevych (Kyiv: Ukraine, 1995), 102.

³⁶ Dzh. Deppler; T. Lorman & U. Sharma, “Reconsidering special assistive services in inclusive classrooms”, *Defectology*, Vol: 3 num 53 (2009): 9-14.

In our opinion the idea of John Dewey to use the method that has justified itself in science to solve social problems, particularly in inclusive education is right and actual in our time. Has society accepted such idea by John Dewey? On the basis of real facts, it can be said: not totally, but to a large extent the idea has been accepted. This is evidenced not only by theoretical work by many modern scholars in developed countries (primarily the USA and Europe), but also by practical achievements in the field of public life, organization and development of inclusive education. In particular, in the United States, the “Seven Pillars of Inclusive Education” have been developed and implemented on the principles of theory of pragmatism³⁷. As the Canadian experience shows, the targeted training of teachers in this area of education takes place, the support for children and their families is organized prior to the student’s coming to school, as well an appropriate support during schooling is provided, etc.³⁸

Another important concept in the work of Dewey was the concept of “problem situation”. Despite the fact that it is not formulated clearly, it is still easy to see that the philosopher tried to synthesize the ideas of Charles Peirce and William James. It is in this approach that the thinker’s “instrumentalism” reveals, according to which concepts, categories and definitions serve as instruments for achieving goals and aspirations of a person. With the help of concepts (their use) doubts in achieving the goal are overcome, a person begins to act freely and creatively. In the process of solving a “problem situation”, a person gets rid of doubt, acquires a state of faith, creates conditions for reconstruction and improvement of acquired experience.

Moral problems in pragmatism are also considered through the prism of selfishness (“ethical relativism”); what brings real benefits to man and society is proclaimed moral. In particular, Dewey emphasized that teaching subjects is of value only when both a teacher and a student are aware of the importance of social life³⁹. From this perspective, the thinker considered not only the purpose of school activity, essence and content of moral education in school community, but also the psychological aspects of moral education.

Philosophical, psychological and pedagogical pragmatism has not stopped its development. Its followers (Ferdinand Schiller, George Herbert Mead, Ralph Perry and others) have made great efforts to explore new important problems of meaning of human life and its legal protection⁴⁰.

American philosopher Richard Rorty has played a particularly prominent role here. The scholar substantiated the project of “destruction” in which he denied the philosophical tradition, which was based on the principles of metaphysics, transcendentalism and fundamentalism. At the same time, the thinker emphasizes that pragmatism developed by Peirce, James and Dewey ignored such complex and important issue of human existence, which is the “phenomenon of language”. Rorty argues that a language is extremely useful within a particular situation, and therefore, it serves as the basic tool for the effective action of an individual in environment.

³⁷ T. Lorman, “Seven pillars of inclusive education. How to switch from the “why” to the “how” question?”, *Defectology*, Vol. 3 (2010): 3-11.

³⁸ Sh. Crocker, “Policy of support for inclusion (Canadian Experience)”, *Defectology*, Vol: 4 (2009): 4-6.

³⁹ J. Dewey, *Moral principles in education* (Lviv: Litopys. 2001), 24.

⁴⁰ S. S. Kravchenko, *Pragmatism in the philosophy of law of the United States of America* (Kyiv: “FOP Seredniak T. K.”, 2014).

Richard Rorty contrasts pragmatism as the most, in his opinion, holistic, open, and creative perception of the worldview to all philosophy. According to Rorty, the study of individuality and society, comprehensive and indifferent to the disciplinary and philosophical division should take place of philosophy as a peculiar synthesis of epistemology, foundations of culture (“ideology”) and “strict science”. The idea of “ubiquitous language” as a universal form of human experience and the concept of man as a creative being that does not reveal the truth, but creates life himself is important here. A man realizes himself in a language, and therefore the essence of real humanitarian thinking must coincide with the imperatives of “literary criticism” rather than with the essence of philosophy.

Rorty emphasized: we can acknowledge the “true” philosophy that helps us “cope with the environment”, harsh challenges of life. This philosophy is become known as neopragmatism, which comprehended and carried out a real “linguistic turn”. This turn logically leads to the post-philosophical culture that includes professionals from different fields of knowledge and the importance of academic philosophy decreases in its structure. At the same time, a special professional subject disappears; instead, according to the scholar, there comes the time for integration of sciences and interdisciplinarity, which help to solve important problems faced by a human being. Making such philosophical reasoning, Richard Rorty developed a type of “pragmatic hermeneutics” – the concept of full dependence of interpretations of a “text” on the needs of the interpreter or community to which it belongs⁴¹. Actually, the principle of integrating scientific knowledge in the education system, namely inclusive education is dominant in most progressive countries of the world⁴². The interdisciplinary approach has been successfully implemented in inclusive practices at the modern schools, Centers for Teen Parents⁴³, etc.

Conclusions

Philosophy of pragmatism makes it possible:

Firstly, to perceive a person as the highest value, since the uniqueness of each is indisputable; so it is worth proving that the world of a human is incomplete, it has potential opportunities for its improvement, based on own life choices, goal-setting and motivation for self-affirmation.

Secondly, to realize that all known truths are relevant, varied and therefore pertain to re-evaluation. In this approach, studying the essence and content of consciousness and thinking, which can help a child with special needs to verify truth and own empirical experience receives a special value.

Thirdly, to understand that the experience of a person in its essence is subjective. Its value is to improve the conditions of one's own life and to contribute to the worthy living of others. Also, it is important for a researcher to analyze the mechanism of forming

⁴¹ R. Rorty, *The Linguistic Turn Recent Essays in Philosophic Method* (Chicago UP, 1992).

⁴² O. Budnyk, “Innovative Competence of a Teacher: best European Practices”, *Journal of Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University*, Vol: 6 num 1 (2019): 76-89. DOI: 10.15330/jpnu.6.1.76-89.

⁴³ H. Mykhailyshyn & O. Budnyk, “Social and Educational Support of Young Parents and their Children”, *Journal of Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University*, Vol: 5 num 1 (2018): 107-113. DOI: 10.15330/jpnu.5.1.107-113.

experience of each person with special needs; to provide appropriate and effective recommendations for its use in certain specific situations.

Fourth, to be convinced that pragmatism, in the opinion of its creators, is not so much a theory as an empirical method of understanding reality. Hence, a researcher should analyze the real life conditions of a child with special needs, possibilities of its adaptation to the environment, relations in a family, school, etc. The results of such research enable development and implementation of a system of humane relations between subjects of interaction, as well as finding compromise solutions to resolve conflict situations.

Fifthly, recognizing that every person aspires to mental balance, happiness, a researcher on the basis of experimental data should explore a mental state of a person with special needs, determine “boundary” situations of its existence, and also offer effective ways of forming self-confidence of this person, meaning of being, overcoming doubt, uncertainty, fear of life difficulties, etc.

Finally, observance of the theory of pragmatism regarding the fact that successful teaching and education of children with special needs is carried out due to the humane pedagogical activity of a teacher. It is worth studying efficient cultural and educational conditions in which a teacher becomes capable of such actions, and what prevents their manifestation. It is important to study exactly how spiritual and moral principles in education are adhered to, and how it affects the development of a person with disability and the awareness of value of his/her own and social life.

The following conclusions can be drawn on the basis of our research:

1. Pragmatism as a philosophical and cultural theory of developed countries (primarily the USA), has long been denied by Soviet and post-Soviet scientists. In fact, it has a powerful methodological potential for research on science and general education, but above all for modern inclusive education.

2. Philosophical, psychological and pedagogical pragmatism, which its founders intended to use in practice, has yielded positive results primarily due to the orientation on the experimental research (“experimental evolutionism”), human experience, subjective thinking and consciousness. Such an approach is valuable in terms of studying the inner spiritual, moral, mental world of a person with special needs in the process of his/her socialization.

3. The application of pragmatism as an active method of cognition has proven its openness (not being a closed theoretical system), the ability to analyze a complicated life situation for both a student and a teacher. The main thing is that this method helps to know the truth and define its humanistic guidelines at communication and real interaction of subjects of a study.

4. The principle of evolutionism and spontaneous growth is one of the cornerstones of classical pragmatism, which is used by neopragmatists to study complex linguistic issues, to define live meaning for children with special educational needs and to be aware of the constant growth of their personality.

5. The functional meaning of consciousness, thinking and experience allows us to assert about the methodological closeness and similarities of scientific and religious approaches to understanding the complex life issues that are encountered daily by students with disabilities as well as various professionals who carry out medical, psychological and pedagogical support.

6. The idea of instrumentalism is evident in pragmatism and neopragmatism. Moreover, for modern neopragmatism, an increasingly distinct contradiction between the universal dimension of epistemology and a situational approach to the analysis of the state and development of theoretical and practical aspects of inclusive education is becoming increasingly characteristic.

We consider promising for further research questions of creative use of the best international practices in the field of organization and management of inclusive education and a real state of interaction “teacher – student with special needs” in terms of inclusion.

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