# Methodological Support of Professional Activity of Pedagogues upon Preschool Children Remote Studying

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**Abstract**: This article is about finding special features of professional pedagogical activity in the process of preschool children remote studying within the new contexts. For that purpose, modern trends of remote education in the system of general education have been studied based on the analysis of scientific psychological and pedagogical literature. The content of methodological support of professional activity of pedagogues upon preschool children remote studying and check of its efficiency in overcoming occurring professional difficulties of pedagogues is definite and grounded. With that purpose, practices of methodological support of pedagogues upon preschool children remote studying were analyzed; reasonability of organization of methodological support of professional activity of pedagogues was grounded as a roadmap for overcoming professional difficulties occurring upon preschool children remote studying, its content has been determined; algorithm for construction of individual programs of methodological support of pedagogues within the scope of informational-methodological environment of remote studies was developed and described; efficiency of methodological support of professional activity of pedagogues in cooperation upon overcoming professional difficulties occurring within the process of preschool children remote studying was proved.

**Keywords:** *remote studying, pedagogical activity, methodological support of pedagogues.*

## 1. Introduction.

The main factors of development of the sphere of education (characterized by constant modernization) are informatization, expansion of informational-educational space and active introduction of remote education forms, which allow to create conditions for the demand for affordable and qualitative education that meets the requirements of innovative development of economy, modern needs of society and every person regardless of sex, age, health and religion.

As a result, the practice of remote education characterized by a high degree of interactivity, productivity and activity of both preschool children and pedagogues' professional activity, has been comprehensively developed. The conditions for implementation of remote education determine the specific requirements for a pedagogue who must be able to design the educational process in a networked interaction with learners; to form an information and educational environment for remote studying; to design electronic educational and methodical complexes; to manage leaners' studies remotely, taking into account their changing educational needs in mobile manner.

## 2. Analysis of research and publications

The analysis of scientific researches of various aspects of remote studies, the role of the pedagogue in it, problems of pedagogical activity, difficulties of pedagogues arising in the process of pedagogical activity as a whole and in its separate components, is evidence of active interest of scientists in the problems of professional activity of a modern pedagogue, to its readiness to solve professional tasks in new conditions of studying Aggarwal & Thakur (2013, p. 435), Kazakova (2009), Masalkov & Semyna (2011), Middleton (2002), Mitchell &. Hegde (2007), Novikov (2013), Sysoeva (2013), Świtała (2012), Varetska (2019), Woodside(2010).

Remote studies in the broad sense means a specific form of education, which is carried out with the use of technical means of telecommunication in case of remoteness of subjects of education from each other.

At the first stages of development of remote studying there was an opinion that this is one of the forms of extra-mural studying. Today it is obvious that remote studying is the most rapidly and dynamically developing field of education, which allows creating new models and forms of educational process organization.

In scientific and pedagogical sources we have found quite a lot of works devoted to the research of theory and practice in the field of information and communication technologies in education and remote studying. However, the analysis of scientific pedagogical literature and Internet sources allowed us to make sure that there is no uniform understanding of remote studying – researchers sometimes offer different and contradictory interpretations of concepts from this field, there is a mix or synonymization of them.

It should be emphasized that the majority of authors are focused on considering professional pedagogical activity as a system consisting of two groups of components: structural (providing understanding of the elements of the pedagogical activity system) and functional (establishing functional interdependencies between the elements).

Our analysis has shown that, depending on the grounds, researchers distinguish various functions of pedagogical activity, such as: constructive, organizational, communicative, informational, developing, orienting, mobilizing, gnostic, research, presentative, intensive, corrective and diagnostic, etc., as well as other functions.

**Research goal and tasks**

The fundamental goal of methodological support of pedagogues' professional activity in remote studying of preschool children is to promote *the development of the subjective professional position of each pedagogue, implying the mastering of ways of self-development and reflexive self-analysis of activities to overcome professional difficulties*.

Difficulties that is understood within the framework of this article as subjective and objective reflection in the form of professional tasks of unsolved contradictions "pedagogues – new contexts of professional activity", are the driving force behind the process of methodological support. Therefore, in our opinion, its organizational basis and content should be conditioned:

– on the one hand, a characteristic of the process of overcoming pedagogues' professional difficulties,

– on the other hand – professional tasks of pedagogical activity in the new contexts of remote studying.

In addition, we believe that the content and organizational basis for methodological support of pedagogues' professional activities in remote studying for preschool children should be determined taking into account the peculiarities of the process of education of an adult, his position as a

subject of education, *subject to the existing experience, needs and system of his values*.

These features influence the methods of adult education and should, on the one hand, contribute to the formation of a critical attitude of an adult to his or her own experience, his or her awareness and reassessment, and on the other hand, put him or her in the position of a researcher who develops his or her own solution together with the instructor (supporter). It is this approach that allows to create conditions for professional and personal self-development of a pedagogue, his or her self-actualization, since the ability to make decisions independently and take responsibility for them is the main feature of behavior and self-awareness of an adult.

## Statement of the main material

We consider methodological support of professional activity of pedagogues in remote studying of preschool children as part of a system of continuous process of support carried out in the process of remote studying in four areas: managerial, methodological, psychological, technological.

*Managerial direction of support* – helps to solve organizational and managerial problems and is implemented to moderate, organize and coordinate the remote studying process of preschool children through prompt, productive interaction between the companion and pedagogue.

*The technological* direction of support is carried out by means of specialized programs and solves the following problems: rendering of the operative technical help; creation of conditions for formation of ICT competence of pedagogues, formation of abilities and skills of work with specific services and tools; granting of the necessary information on specialized programs of preschool children remote training, etc.

Joint discussion of questions and problems, diagnostics and solution of professional conflicts, assistance in self-development of the pedagogue in the conditions of information and educational environment of remote studying are tasks of *psychological support* which is directed on activation of positive factors of self-development and neutralization of negative, allows to remove resistance to occurring changes in professional pedagogical activity in its new contexts.

*Methodological* support is aimed at promoting the development of a professional position of a pedagogue and to create conditions for them to make a professional choice of methodological tools and ways to overcome difficulties that arise upon preschool children remote studying. It is carried out by the methodological service of remote studying, which consists of

experienced methodologists (pedagogues) who have the necessary qualifications in the field of pedagogical and remote studying technologies.

It is *the methodological support of pedagogues' professional activities upon preschool children remote studying* that is the subject of our article, below *we will characterize it and describe its content.*

In our research, while continuing to be based on the theory of support developed by E. I. Kazakova (2009), taking into account the special features of the process of overcoming professional difficulties in preschool children remote studying and the strategy of methodological support of pedagogues' professional activities in preschool children remote studying described above, we can assume that it should be implemented through the following consequent **stages**:

1. *Stage of establishing network interaction with the accompanied one (identifying the subjects of the accompanying).*

Accompanying involves identifying the carrier of the problem, to activate the internal potential of which the process of accompanying is directed, so the purpose of this stage is to receive a request for assistance from a pedagogue who has encountered some or other difficulties in the process of solving professional tasks in new contexts of pedagogical activity. At this stage, the issue of establishing the pedagogue's trust in his or her supporter and ensuring the availability of assistance (E. I. Kazakova [Ibid.]) is crucial; therefore, one of the tasks of the accompanying service specialists is to ensure interactive contacts with pedagogues in need of support and to design optimal forms of networking in an information and methodological environment.

2. *The diagnostic phase* is aimed at identifying professional difficulties faced by pedagogues and understanding their essence, the carriers of the problem, and potential solutions. At this stage, a diagnosis of the pedagogues' professional difficulties is made. The diagnostic stage begins with fixing the difficulty and defining the aspect of the professional problem in the process of solving it. As a signal of difficulty, the pedagogue may appeal to the remote studying service or the administration of the preschool where he works, the student or his/her parent/legal representative. At this stage, the design of individual programs for methodological support of pedagogues begins.

3. At the stage of *picking informational and methodical materials* the specialists of remote education methodological accompanying service form informational-methodological environment (informational and methodological materials being both part of content of accompanying informational-methodological environment and resources being in open

accessed of the Internet network), promoting development of professional and subject position of a pedagogue and enabling him/her to master various ways of self-development, to create conditions for the pedagogue to choose the ways to overcome difficulties events found at the diagnostics stage.

4. *Designing a way to overcome difficulties*. The goal of the stage is to collect all necessary information about ways and means of overcoming difficulties, convey this information to pedagogues, and create conditions for them to become aware of it. Specialists of the support service organize interaction of all interested pedagogues to discuss possible options for overcoming the difficulties, identify positive and negative aspects of different solutions, make forecasts of effectiveness, help form an attitude towards different methods and ways of overcoming the difficulties and help make their choice. It is extremely important for the companion to stimulate the pedagogue's activity and pay attention to any methods and means of overcoming difficulties he or she chooses.

5. *Primary assistance in implementation* lies within solving the difficulties event based on the choice made. The supporter coordinates the pedagogue's activities and supports him/her, helping to feel a "taste of success" upon overcoming the professional difficulties.

6. At the *methodological assistance results evaluation stage*, the supporter evaluates the effectiveness of the methodological support in two stages: an initial evaluation, which reveals the overall appropriateness of the designed programs of individual methodological support of pedagogues and acceptance thereof by the pedagogue; and a delayed evaluation, enabling to assess whether the accompanied has gained experience in overcoming professional learning difficulties in remote studying. Pedagogues carry out a reflexive self-analysis of their own activities to overcome professional difficulties at each stage.

## 3. Research Methods

Materials and methods of research into methodological support of pedagogues' professional activities upon preschool children remote studying.

We tested individual programs for methodological support of pedagogues in remote studying for preschool children on the basis of remote studying preschools in the Odesa region. The testing participants were pedagogues of different subject areas who teach preschool children remotely. We analyzed the results of methodological support of pedagogues' professional activities in overcoming their professional difficulties arising in the process of preschool children remote studying *using the method of research*

*case study in the logic of the activity approach* (Vygotsky, 1982), which makes it possible to consider the process of pedagogues' overcoming professional difficulties as their activity in choosing ways and means of overcoming (aimed at developing the subjective professional position, at mastering the methods of self-development and reflexive self-analysis), taking into account the products of pedagogues' activity, their needs, activity, and motives.

The fundamental point in the development and design of methodological support for teachers is the real professional difficulties of the teacher and the focus on the disclosure and development of individuality, the activation and realization of the personal and professional potential of each teacher. In other words, individual programs of methodological support are built "from the teacher", "from the specific situation" of the difficulty that has arisen in him in the process of solving a particular professional problem. This most important characteristic allowed us to assume that it is advisable to design programs for individual methodological support of teachers in the logic of case-study - the method of specific situations and active problem-situational analysis based on finding ways to get out of the problem by solving specific problems or situations. We emphasize that when using this method in teaching, problematic situations are modeled, and in our case, they are specific real situations of professional difficulties that teachers face in the process of distance learning for preschool children.

The purpose of the case study (analysis of a problem situation and the development of a practical solution to it, the result of which is an assessment of possible ways and methods of solution, the choice of the most optimal of them) is consonant with the tasks of methodological support of teachers in distance learning of preschool children, aimed at overcoming professional difficulties. And the structure of the case is consistent with the activities of teachers, built in the logic of the stages of overcoming difficulties and looks as follows: description of the situation of difficulty; informational and methodological part of the case; case assignments (choice, justification and justification for the decision); reflection of activities to overcome professional difficulties.

As a research method, the case study was considered in various fields (management, political science, economics, sociology, etc.) in the works of the following foreign authors: Flick U., Kardorff E. (2010), Mustafa A. (2008, p. 5), Simons H. (2009), Stake RE (2005), Woodside A. (2010), Yin R.K. (2009) and others. To date, its use has spread to such sciences as psychology and pedagogy. In modern pedagogical science, this method is not used in research as often as in teaching, but in recent years a number of

studies have been carried out where case studies are used to collect and analyze research material. In our opinion, this fact is due to the fact that a person is at the center of modern pedagogy as a sociocultural science, therefore, pedagogical research presupposes an understanding of the qualitative changes taking place in him. In addition, educational systems in the era of reform, modernization and informatization are influenced by many factors and have an open character, which leads to the use of qualitative analysis methods to study the changes taking place in them.

Based on the above mentioned logical reasoning, we assumed that in order to objectively determine the effectiveness of methodological support of pedagogues' professional activities it is necessary to collect multidimensional data characterizing the products and results of pedagogues' activities to overcome professional difficulties in remote studying for preschool children. This determined the choice of the case study method as a research method. It should be noted that it is necessary to distinguish between the concepts of "sade-study" in the contexts of learning (teaching cases) and research (research cases).

The expediency of our choice of a case study to determine the effectiveness of methodological support of pedagogues' professional activities in remote studying of preschool children is confirmed by the following characteristics of the case study:

− investigates a situation that is problematic;

− is a full-fledged comprehensive qualitative method of scientific research that begins with setting a problem task and ends with its resolution;

− is mobile and flexible, allows making necessary corrections in the process of research;

− allows to study situation in dynamics depending on context and its influence;

− consists of complex of different research methods, including different levels of cognitive activity (empirical − collection and primary analysis of data; theoretical − their interpretation).

## 4. The results of the research and their interpretation

**The results of the study of methodological support of pedagogues' professional activities in preschool children remote studying**. 300 pedagogues of different subject areas who implement general education programs in the form of remote studying took part in the

research as respondents. All respondents voluntarily participated in the survey; any participant could refuse from the survey at any time without any consequences for themselves. In that case, the answers of that participant were not taken into account in counting the results.

**For the comparative characterization of the most characteristic and frequent statements of the respondents**, in accordance with the conditions created by the methodological support of pedagogues' professional activities, we chose *content analysis*, a method of empirical research that can be based on both the study of literary sources and the study of public and pedagogical opinion. It is an analysis of the content of texts, answers of respondents, which include materials about the phenomenon under study.

**Discussion of the results of a study of methodological support of pedagogues' professional activities in remote studying for preschool children.** It was obvious that the *advantages and opportunities* of individual programs of methodological support for pedagogues to help pedagogues identify, understand, and overcome professional difficulties and to develop the professional position of each of them are consistent with the conditions of methodological support for pedagogues' professional activities in remote studying for preschool children noted by respondents (Table 1). This intersection allows us to make sure that the conditions and content of the methodological support are determined correctly.

Table 1 - Proportion of Advantages of Individual Programs of Pedagogues Methodological Support with the Conditions of Methodological Support Determined by the Respondents
Source: developed by the authors' conception

| Conditions of Methodological Support of Professional Activity of Pedagogues in Preschool children Remote Studying | Advantages and Opportunities of Individual Programs of Pedagogues Methodological Support Impacting the Efficiency of Difficulties Overcoming |
|---|---|
| Designing and implementing individual programs of methodological support for teachers aimed at overcoming specific professional difficulties | − the materials of the electronic case allow overcoming specific difficulties of a teacher;<br>− focus the support program on a particular educator and a particular difficulty;<br>− opportunity to take advantage of the program when facing a new difficulty |

| Forming an information and methodological support environment that enables a pedagogue to make a professional choice | − to work in an information and methodological support environment that repeats the conditions of preschool children;<br>− I can attend courses and electronic cases myself;<br>− the opportunity to make their own choice of means and ways to overcome professional difficulties. |
|---|---|
| To provide interactive interaction not only between pedagogues and specialists of the distance studies center, but also with colleagues in the online professional community. | −You can interact with your companion and colleagues in the online professional community at any time;<br>−various forms of interaction with the DSC's support services (choice depending on technical capabilities (Internet speed, availability of a video camera) and networking skills. |

When identifying _disadvantages_, pedagogues noted mainly the active nature of methodological support.

Specialists accompanying pedagogues should take this situation into account when designing the content of methodological support for pedagogues' professional activities in the future, creating conditions for them to develop positive motivation for independent productive activity.

The respondents also mentioned such _factors that have a negative impact_ on the process of methodological support of pedagogues' professional activities as *"insufficient technical capabilities (low Internet speed, lack of necessary equipment for using various forms of online communication, etc.)"* and *"pedagogue's unpreparedness to use remote studying technologies and lack of necessary knowledge and skills"*. At the same time, we would like to emphasize that qualitative analysis of materials from pedagogues' research cases allowed us to record _positive dynamics in changing the level of pedagogues' readiness for remote studying_ and for independent overcoming difficulties (Table 2); in carrying out professional activities in new contexts, lack of tension, and stable motivation for developing professional subjective position.

**Table 2.** Dynamics of Level of Pedagogues Readiness to Professional Activity in
Preschool children Remote Studying
Source: developed by the authors' conception

|  | motivational-value component | | cognitive component | | operational-activity component | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | start of school year | end of school year | start of school year | end of school year | start of school year | end of school year |
| high level | 66 | 81 | 2 | 33 | 1 | 44 |
| medium level | 27 | 18 | 41 | 55 | 75 | 45 |
| low level | 7 | 1 | 57 | 12 | 24 | 11 |

The first problem can be solved by experts of service of remote studying in the course of complex support of remote educational process of preschool children and providing it with necessary resources and technical possibilities.

To the solve the second it is necessary to pay attention at the organization of methodical support of professional activity of pedagogues, developing content of the information-methodical environment – development of new remote courses (on themes demanded by pedagogues), master classes, trainings, replenishment with necessary information and methodical materials, and useful references.

The results of testing individual programs of methodological support for pedagogues revealed risks that we had not previously considered, such as the inability of pedagogues from remote areas (where there is no technical possibility of connecting to the Internet) to use the conditions created in the information and methodological support environment to overcome professional difficulties, as it is impossible to implement the methodological support program in off-line mode.

Within the framework of methodological support of pedagogues' professional activities in remote studying of preschool children it is impossible to prevent such risks, this problem lies in the plane of comprehensive methodological support of the process of remote studying of preschool children and, in our opinion, can be solved by developing specialized software that can be used from removable media. However, this requires additional technical and human resources, which remote studying services do not currently possess.

Thus, *summing up the results of the analysis of a set of empirical materials*

collected in the research cases of pedagogues, we can **make conclusion** that the content of the methodological support of pedagogues' professional activities in the remote studying of preschool children described by us contributes to the overcoming of occurring professional difficulties by pedagogues, the development of subjective professional position, mastering the methods of self-development and reflexive self-analysis of activities to overcome professional difficulties.

Our use of the case study method enabled us to fully disclose the impact of individual programs of methodological support of pedagogues on the successful overcoming of professional difficulties in the remote studying of students.

Qualitative characteristics of the effectiveness of methodological support of pedagogues' professional activities in remote studying from the point of view of the actors themselves, and the multidimensional empirical data collected through the comprehensive use of various methods allow us to state that the testing of individual programs of methodological support of pedagogues in remote studying of preschool children revealed convincing positive results in pedagogues' overcoming professional difficulties that testify to their success in overcoming professional difficulties in remote studying. However, the remaining inertia of pedagogues and their desire to carry out their activities according to ready-made templates without wasting much time are of concern. Research into these issues requires independent study.

## 5. Conclusions

The conducted research enabled to obtain the following results:

The peculiarities of remote studying define *new contexts* **of professional pedagogical activity**, which acquires other characteristics and can be considered as a *complex organized system of professional tasks implemented in a purposeful, interactive network interaction of all subjects of the educational process in the educational environment of remote studying*. In the conditions of the remote form of training, the professional activity of the pedagogue: *is implemented* by means of telecommunication technologies, enabling to initiate interactive joint activity with students; *is focused* on search of optimal means of satisfaction of educational needs of preschool children, on achievement of certain purposes of training by means of designing of electronic educational resources and expansion of an electronic content of the information and educational environment of remote learning.

*New contexts of professional pedagogical activity* lead to transformation of its **professional tasks**, including such tasks, as:

– *to see the pupil in the educational process* taking place in the conditions of the information-educational environment of remote studying;

– *to build the educational process* in an interactive, productive, invariant in time and space process of interaction with all subjects of the educational process through technologies of remote studying;

– *to organize interactive subject-to-subject interaction* in the conditions of the remote studying environment;

– *manage the remote studying educational process* of preschool children , their independent work in the conditions of the remote studying environment and manage their own pedagogical activities;

– *create an information and educational environment* for remote studying and use its capabilities;

– *design and implement professional* self-education in the conditions of information and educational environment;

– *work with information resources* both in the remote studying environment and in the informational and educational space.

In the process of solving the above tasks of professional pedagogical activity, pedagogues experience **difficulties** caused by its *external contexts* (caused by the essential characteristics of the remote studying environment (the complexity of the task to be solved in the conditions of remote studying) and *internal contexts* (caused by the unpreparedness of pedagogues to carry out professional activity in remote studying (subjective difficulty for a particular pedagogue), and by the *discrepancy* in understanding the ways of organizing the educational environment). *Typical* (most often referred to as pedagogues) difficulties are due to necessity:

– *activation of independent cognitive activity* of preschool children in the conditions of a remote studying environment (temporary and territorial distance) based on a constant diagnosis of their educational needs and cognitive activity;

– *management of the educational process* as an interactive process of network interaction of subjects of education (individual effective interaction with students and their parents) in online and offline modes;

– *formation* of an electronic content of the *environment of distant learning* (development of electronic and digital educational resources, distance courses);

– *implementation of independent productive professional activity* in the remote studying environment directed on achievement of the purposes of

education by the preschool children .

The conducted research does not claim to be the exhaustive solution of the considered problem. As it has shown – independent research is required for the questions of professional training of specialists of the remote studying centers; the problem of other content characteristics of the activity of supporters and evaluation of its effectiveness; the questions of revealing the timekeeping of the activity of support subjects, its optimization.

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