

UDC [37.091.4:172.12]:-(73)(043.3)

DOI <https://doi.org/10.24919/2308-4863/84-2-40>

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## COMMUNICATION TRAINING IN FORMING COMMUNICATIVE SELF-EFFICACY OF FUTURE PRESCHOOL SPECIALISTS IN THE USA

*The article highlights the potential of communication training in higher education institutions in the United States in developing communicative self-efficacy of future preschool specialists. The curricula of the US higher education institutions for the presence of communication training in the general education system of undergraduate students and its role in forming their communicative self-efficacy have been analyzed and generalized. The essence of the keyword "self-efficacy" in the concept "communicative self-efficacy" is viewed as an important indicator of people's behavior, activity and well-being. Activity-related self-efficacy is considered an important indicator of successful professional activity and a desired outcome for lifelong learning. It is outlined that communicative self-efficacy as a professionally important meta-quality is a set of individual's beliefs of their own productive communicative actions and strategies that provide confidence in achieving a positive result in various situations of interpersonal interaction, as well as readiness to effectively implement communication. On the basis of the curricula analysis it is found that the potential of communication training of future specialists of the preschool sphere in the US higher education institutions is realized through oral and written communication in: the values-based aspect, which ensures the orientation of the educational process towards the production and support of universal human values, socio-cultural patterns of behavior, as well as satisfaction of the perceived need for communication between existing, accumulated knowledge and newly generated socio-cultural representations in the communicative environment of a higher education institution in the USA; the social-activity aspect, which actualizes knowledge into a direct productive base for the exchange of experience through a systematic set of communicative means and methods of mutual understanding and constructive interaction, contributing to forming communicative self-efficacy of students-future preschool specialists.*

**Key words:** *self-efficacy, communicative self-efficacy, future preschool specialists, curriculum, communication training, US higher education institutions, undergraduate general education.*

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## КОМУНІКАТИВНА ПІДГОТОВКА У ФОРМУВАННІ КОМУНІКАТИВНОЇ САМОЕФЕКТИВНОСТІ МАЙБУТНІХ ФАХІВЦІВ ДОШКІЛЬНОЇ ГАЛУЗІ В США

*У статті висвітлено потенціал комунікаційної підготовки у вищих навчальних закладах США у розвитку комунікативної самоефективності майбутніх дошкільників. Проаналізовано й узагальнено курикулуми закладів вищої освіти США щодо наявності комунікативної підготовки в системі загальної освіти студентів бакалаврату та її ролі у формуванні їхньої комунікативної самоефективності. Сутність ключового слова «самоефективність» у понятті «комунікативна самоефективність» розглядається як важливий показник поведінки, діяльності та благополуччя людей. Діяльнісна самоефективність вважається важливим показником успішної професійної діяльності та бажаним результатом для навчання впродовж життя. Визначено, що комунікативна самоефективність як професійно важлива метаякість є сукупністю переконань особистості щодо власних продуктивних комунікативних дій і стратегій, які забезпечують впевненість у досягненні позитивного результату в різних ситуаціях міжособистісної взаємодії, а також готовність до ефективного реалізації спілкування. На основі аналізу курикулумів встановлено, що потенціал комунікаційної підготовки майбутніх фахівців дошкільної сфери у закладах вищої освіти США реалізується через усну та письмову комунікацію в: ціннісному аспекті, що забезпечує орієнтацію освітнього процесу на вироблення та підтримку загальнолюдських цінностей, соціокультурних моделей поведінки, а також задоволення усвідомленої потреби в комунікації між наявними, накопиченими знаннями та новоствореними; соціокультурні уявлення в комунікативному середовищі закладу вищої освіти США;*

*соціально-діяльнісний аспект, який актуалізує знання в безпосередню продуктивну базу для обміну досвідом через системний комплекс комунікативних засобів і прийомів взаєморозуміння та конструктивної взаємодії, що сприяє формуванню комунікативної самоефективності студентів-майбутніх фахівців дошкільної галузі.*

**Ключові слова:** *самоефективність, комунікативна самоефективність, майбутні фахівці дошкільної галузі, курикулум, комунікативна підготовка, заклади вищої освіти США, загальна підготовка на бакалавраті.*

**Problem statement.** Today, global political and socio-economic changes that create conditions of uncertainty, variability, and increased conflict are making significant adjustments to the traditional scheme of human life, establishing new standards of life success. A person is faced with the need to solve complex tasks, search for individual personal resources for productive self-realization. Under such conditions, not only and not so much professional skills and abilities become in demand, but also soft skills that help a person to successfully function in society, as well as understand themselves, regulate their condition, be a subject of activity and communication.

In this regard, in a modern institution of higher education, the problem of forming communicative self-efficacy of future specialists, in particular in the preschool sphere, is becoming increasingly relevant. This meta-quality implies confidence in one's own effectiveness based on awareness and reflection of one's own success in communication and gaining one's own communicative experience, and determines a person's communicative readiness for effective actions in various spheres of their life.

**Research analysis.** The results of the analysis of modern Ukrainian and foreign psychological and pedagogical research indicate a significant increase in interest in the problem of self-efficacy in various spheres of human life (A. Bandura, C. Barbaranelli, J. Caprara, D. Cervon, J. Maddux, F. Pajares, C. Pastorelli and others). However, most of the works focus on the general self-efficacy of an individual. The phenomenon of communicative self-efficacy is studied fragmentarily, most often in the context of applied psychological research (M. Boyle, G. Lin, J. Hodis, F. Hodis and others).

The essence of the keyword "self-efficacy" in the concept "communicative self-efficacy" is an important indicator of people's behavior, activity and well-being (Reyhing, Perren, 2012). Activity-related self-efficacy is considered an important indicator of successful professional activity (Zee, Koomen, 2016). Self-efficacy is also defined as a desired outcome for lifelong learning (von Suchodoletz, Jamil, Larsen, Hamre, 2018).

A definitive analysis of the concept "self-efficacy" demonstrates its widespread application in a broad categorical field of psychological science. Researchers attribute this phenomenon to vari-

ous classes of psychological phenomena, but most often its understanding appears as the individual's belief in his or her ability to carry out activities, as well as his or her own development in achieving the goals and objectives set before him or her. Common to existing definitions is a sense of belief in one's constructive personal abilities, optimism, and striving for future achievements (Datsenko, 2020).

The category of self-efficacy is based on A. Bandura's social cognitive theory, according to which self-efficacy is "the belief in one's own ability to organize and perform the actions necessary to achieve given goals" (Bandura, 1997: 3). A. Bandura identifies four sources of self-efficacy expectations: mastery experience (considered the most influential source of self-efficacy, providing the most reliable information about one's own ability to achieve success); vicarious or incidental experience (meaning learning through the experience of others, for example, conversation or reading); verbal persuasion (feedback from significant people); physiological and emotional arousal (occurs through one's own perception of one's physiological and emotional states) (Bandura, 1977; 1997).

Beliefs in self-efficacy are the basis for choosing and persisting in a certain activity, including professional activities in the field of preschool education. They also influence one's own perceptions, actions and emotions. Numerous studies, as A. Bandura argues, confirm the assumption of the importance of self-efficacy for human achievements in many areas, such as sports, health business or education (Bandura, 1997). In particular, self-efficacy relates to the work of teachers: "Teacher efficacy is the teacher's belief in his or her ability to organize and execute the actions necessary to successfully implement a particular educational task in a specific context" (Tschannen-Moran, A. Hoy, W. Hoy, 1998: 233). The results of studies showed that teachers with higher self-efficacy, and especially teachers with more experience, tend to use in their work more proactive and person-centered pedagogical technologies (Pajares, 1997; Reyhing, Perren, 2012; Zee, Koomen, 2016).

In turn, communicative self-efficacy as a professionally important meta-quality is a set of individual's beliefs of their own productive communicative actions and strategies that provide confidence in achieving a positive result in various situations of interpersonal interaction, as well as readiness to

effectively implement communication. G. Hodis and F. Hodis define “communicative self-efficacy as one’s beliefs in her/his own capability to communicate effectively in given encounters (G. Hodis, F. Hodis, 2012: 42-43). “The concept of communicative self-efficacy is relevant for all levels of communication skills” of students (G. Hodis, F. Hodis, 2012: 43). The conceptualization of communicative self-efficacy beliefs include not only “the exercise of control over action” but also “the self-regulation of thought processes, motivation, and physiological states” (Bandura, 1997: 36) that are needed for effective communication in a specific situation.

Taking into account the afore mentioned research, however, there is a significant lack of research on preschool educators’ communicative self-efficacy.

**Purpose of the article** is to highlight the potential of communication training in higher education institutions in the United States in developing communicative self-efficacy of future preschool specialists. The implementation of the set goal required solving the following tasks: to carry out a critical analysis of the literature on the problem under study; to analyze and generalize the curricula of the US higher education institutions for the presence of communication training in the general education system of undergraduate students and its role in forming their communicative self-efficacy.

**Main material.** By analyzing the curricula of 16 higher education institutions in the United States that train future specialists in the preschool sector (Governors State University (<https://www.govst.edu/>), University of Nevada, Las Vegas (<https://www.unlv.edu/>), University of Idaho (<https://www.uidaho.edu/>), Western Illinois University (<https://www.wiu.edu/>), Northeastern Illinois University (<https://www.neiu.edu/>), Montclair State University (<https://www.montclair.edu/>), Peninsula College (<https://pencol.edu/>), University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown (<https://www.johnstown.pitt.edu/>), George Mason University (<https://www.gmu.edu/>), Southwest Minnesota State University (<https://www.smsu.edu/>), Siena Heights University (<https://www.sienaheights.edu/>), Contra Costa College (<https://www.contracosta.edu/>), Delaware County Community College (<https://www.dccc.edu/>), San José City College (<https://sjcc.edu/>), Fox Valley Technical College (<https://www.wtcsystem.edu/colleges/fox-valley-technical-college/>), Riverside City College (<https://www.rc.edu/index.html>)), it is found that all these institutions have introduced courses at the undergraduate level within one or more educational areas focused on communication training. These courses are aimed at developing in students the skills of effective interpersonal and intercultural communication, tech-

niques for expressing their authorial identity in oral and written speech, which serves as a certain indicator of students’ ability and readiness for educational and research activities and an indicator of their academic success. It should be noted that each higher education institution has its own requirements for the content of students’ communication training (written communication is a mandatory element of all the curricula studied).

For instance, as far as communication training is concerned, the aim of the General Education Program at Northeastern Illinois University is to assist students in developing the following: the ability to communicate both in writing and orally; the skills required to gather, analyze, document, and integrate information.

In turn, at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, written communication is an integral part of almost all courses during the four-year undergraduate program. Systematized knowledge and skills in academic writing are the common foundation for all students on which they build their personal knowledge, accumulate their own experience within the framework of studying a particular course, and regularly present their written reflections for discussion in the classroom.

Completing written assignments forces students to systematically generate coherent texts on the topics studied, accustoms them to mental discipline, and helps them master the language of a particular academic field. By investing effort in completing written assignments, students immerse themselves more deeply in the subject and begin to participate more actively in classroom discussions (Fedorenko, 2017).

Professors of this university in their teaching regularly (at the end of almost every session, upon completion of the study of the topic, etc.) resort to writing essays, which allows assessing students’ ability to independently work with various sources of information, studying the material to be learned in more depth, to argue in writing and prove their position on the basis of cause-and-effect relationships. The main goal of the essay is to present students’ independent vision of the problem, topic based on the literature studied in accordance with the communicative strategy, style, etc. chosen by the students. The essay is written in any form for 5–20 minutes. At the same time, the manifestation of individuality and argumentation are assessed (Fedorenko, 2017).

The University of Nevada has introduced a course “Composition” for first-year students, which is aimed at developing students’ ability to generate their own thoughts and build effective arguments when writing works of various types (descriptions, reflections, etc.). This course has become mandatory in the general education of undergraduate students at many American universities and colleges.

In addition to written communication, another important component of the communicative training of undergraduate students in higher education institutions in the United States, which has significant educational potential, is rhetoric. According to the well-known American educator and researcher in educational sphere J. Gatto, the great humanist thinkers of the Renaissance (Petrarch, Erasmus, Machiavelli, etc.) found a subtle connection between rhetoric – the art of communication – and the moral education of the individual. And the philosophy of the Reformation, especially in the Anglo-Saxon world, rejected rhetoric, and therefore the benefits that people received from it: a sense of their own significance and allowing others to feel their significance, which is achieved through attentive listening, intelligent questions, and appropriate and friendly remarks (Gatto, 1997).

Therefore, today, it is necessary for a successful life to form in students the ability to conduct various types of conversation, which are as follows: conversation-self-expression, which can take the form of one's own opinion, criticism, remarks, instruction, etc.; conversation-dissemination of information; conversation-competition; conversation-expression of interest as a way to make others feel their significance or as a way to show compassion, kindness, care, etc.; conversation-entertainment, which is based on humor and wit; spiritual conversation-search for the meaning of life, which is most important for students' self-knowledge and self-education (Gatto, 1997).

The actualization of the potential of communication training of American students in the formation of their communicative self-efficacy is based on the understanding of communication as: the most important channel for transmitting information and, accordingly, knowledge; the process in which, through symbols, an individual's identity, his/her social connections and relationships, his/her general world of significant objects and events, his feelings and thoughts, his ways of expressing these socially dependent realities are formed and improved (Craig,

2001: 125). It is communication as a mandatory element of general training in US higher education that provides a comprehensive vision of culture and societies (Fedorenko, 2017).

Communication training of American undergraduate students involves mastering the art of writing and delivering not only public speeches, but also texts and essays on various socio-cultural topics. At the same time, students study classical political and legal speeches, which is closely related to the high democratic culture of American society, and read and discuss classical works from various fields of knowledge (Myropolska, Fedorenko, 2016). In this way, such component as communication training in the US general education is aimed at forming communicative self-efficacy of students by means of language not only in a linguistic aspect, but in a transdisciplinary dimension of different texts as objects-standards of cognition and values-normative samples.

**Conclusions.** Thus, by the curricula analysis we found that the potential of communication training of future specialists of the preschool sphere in the US higher education institutions is realized through oral and written communication in: the values-based aspect, which ensures the orientation of the educational process towards the production and support of universal human values, socio-cultural patterns of behavior, as well as satisfaction of the perceived need for communication between existing, accumulated knowledge and newly generated socio-cultural representations in the communicative environment of a higher education institution in the USA; the social-activity aspect, which actualizes knowledge into a direct productive base for the exchange of experience through a systematic set of communicative means and methods of mutual understanding and constructive interaction, contributing to forming students' communicative self-efficacy.

The scope of further research lies in studying organizational and pedagogical conditions in the US higher education that ensure the formation of students' communicative self-efficacy.

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