УДК 159.92
DOI: https://doi.org/10.32405/2413-4139-2024-2(33)-78-83

Lisova Larysa,
Kyiv, Ukraine
https://orcid.org/0009-0002-3315-0833

IMAGINATIVE TECHNIQUES AS A TOOL FOR DISCOVERING PERSONAL POTENTIAL WHEN WORKING WITH GIFTED CHILDREN IN MARTIAL ARTS CONDITIONS

Summary.

Spending a prolonged period in a zone of military conflict, despite unwavering faith in victory and the reconstruction of our country after losses, makes it crucial to preserve and strengthen the most valuable resource – human capital and intellectual potential. The article addresses the pressing issue of supporting gifted students during particularly challenging times. The preservation, support, and development of their potential form the foundation for fostering national identity and enhancing the intellectual assets of the country, making this topic highly relevant and strategically significant.

The author emphasizes that giftedness is a multifaceted phenomenon encompassing intellectual abilities, consistent and adaptive social behavior, effective interaction strategies, and a conscious process of personal development. To unlock and support the personal potential of gifted individuals, the author proposes to use imaginative techniques into psychological support methods.

According to Viktor Frankl's logotherapy and existential analysis, imagination liberates and strengthens one of the fundamental characteristics of the individual – freedom. Through the own imagination, a person can naturally transcend space and time, experiencing possibilities not yet realized in life.

The process of imagination can be directed toward the past, becoming a space of memories where the individual can reflect on lived experiences, pose essential questions about them, and find a meaningful position regarding what has been endured. For the future, imagination allows for the creation of an unlimited number of envisioned scenarios, with the freedom of choice enabling one to bring one of these scenarios to life.

In the process of imagination, individuals experience their desires, aspirations, fears, and creative abilities. Imagination can quite literally save a person's life, preventing them from breaking under the most unbearable conditions. The inner world of a person, if directed toward creation, can protect from the external world when the external world brings destruction. Moreover, imagination effectively helps individuals change their destructive attitudes, overcoming the boundaries set by their own consciousness.

Thus, in times of profound challenges and circumstances where human consciousness faces distorted perceptions of time, personal will, and life itself – such as prolonged periods in a war zone – imaginative techniques help bridge the gap between the desired and the real. They strengthen the spirit and will, refocusing the individual on the realm of their possibilities.

Keywords: *imagination; giftedness; logotherapy; Viktor Frankl; existential analysis; education during wartime.*

Giftedness represents an integration of various aspects of personality – intellectual abilities, adaptive social behavior, and a balanced psychological state. The state of war poses numerous complex challenges to society, requiring swift and comprehensive responses. Despite this, ensuring quality education remains a priority, particularly for students with signs of giftedness. For these students, it is essential to adapt educational opportunities to the specific conditions and risks characteristic of wartime, employing a comprehensive set of psychological and pedagogical tools.

The development of gifted students at any point in history must be rooted in a flexible approach that considers their specific needs and the realities of the time [14]. Providing adequate support, access to resources, and effective teaching methods helps unlock their potential and enables them to succeed even in challenging circumstances. This article explores psychological assistance methodologies, including imaginative techniques aimed at enhancing the abilities of gifted students and stabilizing their emotional states. Imaginative techniques not only address emotional well-being but also focus on shaping an internal concept of personal freedom and strengthening the volitional sphere of the individual.

IMAGINATION AS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PEOPLE'S FREEDOM

Freedom is the sphere of the noetic in people [6, p. 182–260]. Imagination processes can be important to instill human freedom of spirit. Through imagination, a person can naturally transcend space and time and, most importantly, experience their own possibilities that have yet to be realized. The process of imagination can be directed toward the past, creating a space of memories. But why is this necessary if the past cannot be changed

© Лісова Л., 2024

or turned into the present? For the sake of the future, imagination allows us to experience multiple (or even an unlimited number of) hypothetical scenarios. The freedom of choice enables us to bring one of them to life.

In the process of imagination, a person experiences their desires, aspirations, fears, and creative abilities. Additionally, it allows to "move into" the minds of others, to imagine what they feel in a given situation, and to understand the reasoning behind their choices.

Imagination can literally save a person's life, helping them not to break under the most unbearable circumstances [13, p. 33]. The inner world of a person (if they are focused on creation) can protect them from external images of the world (especially when the external world brings destruction). Furthermore, imagination helps a person successfully change own destructive beliefs, overcoming the boundaries set by their own consciousness.

Viktor Frankl, in his collection of articles summarizing his sixty years of work, cites the words of his student, Professor Elisabeth Lukas: "In the entire history of psychotherapy, there has been no system as free from dogma as logotherapy" (Lukas E.) [5]. This is a developing system with clearly defined methods and techniques, designed to help a person in the search for life's meaning, which is unique to each individual.

Through imagination, one can:

– discover the nature of fear, understand the reasons for its emergence, and learn to coexist with it, gaining benefits from it;

– imagination will show how to live each day with joy;

– imagination will help understand what true human achievement is, whether it is possible to avoid suffering and guilt, and how to approach death;

– imagination will be useful in the search for answers to the question of who and in what way may prevent a person from finding and realizing the meaning of their own life, and what each stage of their existence – from childhood to old age – brings to a person;

– understand Frankl's instruction: "Live as if you are living for the second time and, in your first attempt, ruined everything that can be ruined. Through fantasy, a person immediately realizes the full extent of the responsibility they bear in every moment of their life" (Lukas E.) [13, p. 44].

What does the term "imagination" include, and what human capabilities are involved in its process?

1) Imagination ("imagine this"):

– Imagination forms images of the final result and actions required to achieve it.

– Imagination allows for the reprogramming of activity and attitudes.

2) The ability to infer a situation:

– This ability creates a behavioral program in situations of uncertainty or when facing problems.

3) Fantasy ("make up", "invent"):

– Fantasy generates images that correspond to the subject's desires.

– Fantasy is a special type of internal activity in which an image of the desired future is created.

4) Dreams, delusions, daydreams:

– These belong to a passive type of imagination (as opposed to the first three points, which are active types of imagination).

Dreams and delusions create images that are not realized in life because they are mostly unattainable. Dreams and delusions serve as a substitute for activity, leading a person to abandon the need to act. They are not connected to willpower, which helps bring intentions to life.

However, it is important to note the beneficial effect of passive imagination in cases where a person's physical freedom is maximally limited. A striking example here is Viktor Frankl, who, while in a concentration camp and performing senseless, exhausting labor, daydreamed about his love for his wife, feeling this love as a nourishing force.

The list of human capabilities mentioned above differs from one another, but all belong to the realm of imagination. Therefore, using any of these capabilities, the term "imagination" can be applied.

The process of imagination is an everyday phenomenon. Humans have this fantastic ability to see images of things that do not exist, that may never happen, or, on the contrary, to vividly and in detail imagine the past, long-gone times (influenced, for example, by certain smells, sounds, etc.).

From early childhood, a person is involved in this process. Who is not familiar with childhood fantasies or fears? An imagined fear of a poor grade may make a student skip a class or avoid an exam, or even drop out of school altogether. A woman in a store tries on a dress, imagining how she will appear in it in public, how beautiful she will look, and just the thought of it makes her happy. Later, she may never wear the dress, forget about it entirely. Her sense of happiness is a product of imagination; the item itself is not necessary for her. She is satisfied with the pleasure from the image created by her imagination.

This is a uniquely human ability – to consciously create an image that did not exist and perhaps will never exist in reality. A person's ability to live in an imaginary, free space is the foundation of their creative activity, whether in visual arts, literature, theater, or music. Even scientific hypotheses are initially products of human imagination, which inspire the search, proof, and realization of what was born in the mind of the scientist.

The ability to imagine, fantasize, and dream brings both positive and negative consequences. Fantasy can be deceptive if, for example, conclusions about a person are made solely based on imagined perceptions of them. Imagined qualities can create an image that has nothing to do with the real object. The result can be destructive. Imagined fears and obstacles can ruin or even break a person's real life. However, to prevent this from happening, imagination techniques come to the rescue – as a way of freeing oneself from various neuroses.

The "daemon" (genius) of Socrates is proof that people have been using imagination since ancient times:

"Socrates. Thanks to divine fate, from early childhood, I have been accompanied by a certain genius – a voice that, whenever I hear it, always tells me to turn back, no matter what I am about to do, but never urges me to do anything. And if, when one of my friends consults me, I hear this voice, it also warns me and prevents me from acting..." (Frankl, V. E.) [5].

The Process of Imagination

Imagination as a Therapeutic Process

In the process of using imagination, one can work on:

a) The individual's self-image – how the patient perceives their own image and the potential for changing this image.

– The goal of working on analyzing one's own image is to achieve self-understanding, awareness of one's abilities, and role in interpersonal relationships.

b) The images of the surrounding environment – the perceptions of the world around the person and the possibility of changing these perceptions.

– The goal of creating certain images of the environment is to form an active life stance, belief in the possibility of being heard, understood, and accepted by society, as well as the ability to bring about changes in one's own life and the lives of those around them. Ideally, imagination techniques foster the development of an individual's creative abilities and potential.

2. Relaxation

Imagination is recommended to begin with relaxation exercises. This allows for a deeper experience and perception of the imagination process (including listening to sounds, feeling scents, and seeing vivid images).

The necessity of using relaxation methods was mentioned by V. Frankl in 1939 in his article "On Medicinal Support of Psychotherapy in Neuroses", where he favorably referred to breathing techniques developed by I. G. Schultz in 1932 (as part of autogenic training) [5].

Breathing technique:

– Deep inhale – loud, slow exhale – "absorbing" the air.

– Or: slow exhale – inhale – hold the breath for 4 seconds (repeat 6 times).

Relaxation is also aided by a relaxed posture (the so-called "coach's pose").

3. Concentration

Relaxation is a necessary stage to achieve complete focus on the image. Without concentration, the process of imagination will be incomplete. Only under this condition can the flow of inner images and their transformation occur.

The images born in the process of imagination can easily "slip away" like butterflies: they were there, and then they are gone. The task of the facilitator is not only to stimulate imagination but also, together with the participants, to "catch" these images, carefully and silently, so as not to disrupt the process and to capture the birth of something new.

4. Does imagination always bring about significant change?

There are times when people do not have a developed imagination or remain emotionally cold. Imagination is not suitable for working with people who have mental illnesses. Some researchers also believe that imagination techniques are not effective in cases of depression.

5. Development of imaginative abilities

As already noted, the ability to imagine (imagination, dreams) is present in almost everyone, but it is developed differently in everyone.

– Some people are skeptical of imagination, rejecting it.

– Others recognize the importance of imagination, but are unable to distinguish specific images from the stream of their dreams.

Regardless of the type of patient, to develop imagination skills, it is worth first working on creating images under guidance.

WORKING WITH IMAGES

Water

After the relaxation exercises, we suggest imagining a body of water. What is it? Is it a pond? A lake? A river? The sea? What is the water like in it – its color, its current. Where are you in relation to the water – on the shore or have you entered the water? Are you standing in the water or swimming? Do you like being in the water? What does water smell like? The image of water easily arises even for those who claim that they cannot imagine.

Fire

You can suggest imagining fire. Fire is a symbol of life, warmth, energy. But fire can also symbolize death, destruction, disappearance. What kind of fire do you see? Is it a fire in a fireplace? The flame of a bonfire? A candle? A conflagration? What do you feel when you look at this fire? Joy, fear? Who is looking at this fire with you?

Tree

Imagination of a tree. A tree is an image of a living being, tied to the ground (by its roots) and at the same time directed towards sunlight. What kind of tree do you imagine? A thin sapling? A mighty centuries-old tree? Does it grow alone or among other trees? Describe the trunk of the tree, leaves, branches. And if you imagine that this tree, is you? What will this tree be like? Is it good where it is? Is there anyone next to it?

The images above are just examples. Their choice can be expanded (for example: sky, ship, house, mountain, etc.). Initial work on creating images helps develop relaxation and concentration skills, opens up faith in one's own imagination, and allows you to identify some of the problems that will have to be worked on in the future.

Classification of imaginative techniques

Let's consider the classification of imagination applied in the process of logotherapy.

Depending on which human capabilities are engaged in the imagination process, the following types are distinguished:

1. Imagination ("imagine this").
2. Inference.
3. Fantasizing ("make up").
4. Dreams, delusions.

Types of imagination in logotherapy:

1. Simple imagination

Based on visualization ("imagine this" – a tree, water, etc.).

Simple imagination can be deepened through the interpretation of metaphors.

2. Multistage imagination

Based on inference and fantasizing – used in narrative techniques.

Stages of multistage imagination:

– perceiving the image;
– the image;
– changing the image;
– changing the plot;
– extracting meaning.

Multistage imagination is used in narrative techniques during the analysis of fairy tales, legends, parables (and other literary works).

3. Time travel

Based on imagination and inference:

– meeting with oneself (as a child);
– meeting with oneself (in 20, 30, etc. years);
– meeting with a loved one (who has passed away).

4. Imagination of consequences

Based on imagination and fantasizing.

5. Living out possibilities and choosing one of them

Based on imagination, inference, and fantasizing.

6. Determining value and cost

Based on imagination.

In the language of logotherapy, the individual must be "dereflexed" from their problems to external tasks that are close to them, reoriented toward their specific calling and life mission. This becomes possible only if the person has defined the meaning of their existence. Thus, Frankl points out, the vicious cycle can only be broken not by the neurotic's self-absorption, which leads to self-pity or self-contempt, but through self-fulfillment. "By shifting the focus of striving from internal conflict to selfless goals, a person's life becomes significantly more integrated and healthy, even if neurotic symptoms are not fully eliminated", notes G. Allport [6, p. 27].

Given the specific experiences that both students and teachers face in everyday life, which may include losses from both the present day and the past, the group facilitator must possess a certain sensitivity to the current emotional landscape of the group (as well as awareness) and appropriately weave in certain accents into the collective experiences through specific techniques. These techniques should help students confront and overcome grief and loss, strengthen their inner strength, rediscover meaning in everyday life despite all the painful experiences, root themselves in faith in their own path, and find the ability to make choices even where the capacity to do so may seem unclear.

References

1. Adler, A. (2007). The science of living. New York.

2. American Psychological Association. (2020). Cognitive restructuring: A practice for effective stress management. Retrieved from: https://moz.gov.ua/uk/psihologichni-poslugi-majut-buti-dostupnimi-jakisnimi-ta-bezoplatnimi-viktor-ljashko.

3. Comprehensive mental health action plan 2013–2030. (2021). Geneva: World Health Organization. Retrieved from: https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240031029.

4. Fee, E., & Brown, T. M. (1997). The Life and Times of Henry E. Sigerist. Baltimore.

5. Frankl, V. E. (1967). Psychotherapy and existentialism: Selected papers on logotherapy. New York. *DOI: https://doi.org/10.1037/h0087982.*

6. Frankl, V. E. (1986). The doctor and the soul: From psychotherapy to Logotherapy. Alfred A. Knopf; 2nd Revised & enlarged edition (January 1, 1965). 292 p.

7. Frankl, V. E. (2000). Man's Search For Ultimate Meaning. Basic Books; Revised edition. 208 p.

8. Frankl, V. E. (2014). The will to meaning: Foundations and applications of logotherapy. New York.

9. Goleman, D. (2006). Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ. New York.
10. Heckman, J. J. (2000). Policies to Foster Human Capital. *Research in Economics.* Vol. 54. P. 3–56.
11. Jung, C. G. (1972). Two essays on analytical psychology. Princeton.
12. Logotherapy and Existential Analysis. *The Wiley World Handbook of Existential Therapy.* P. 381–403.
13. Lukas, E. (2014). Meaning in Suffering: Comfort in Crisis Through Logotherapy. *Purpose Research;* 2nd ed. 140 p.
14. Renzulli, J. S., & Reis, S. M. (ed.) (2016). The three-ring conception of giftedness: A developmental model for promoting creative productivity in Reflections on gifted education. P. 55–86. Waco.
15. Rogers, C. R.; Koch, S. (Ed.) (1959). A theory of therapy, personality, and interpersonal relationships as developed in the client-centered framework. *Psychology: A study of a science.* New York. Vol. 3: Formulations of the person and the social context, P. 184–256.
16. Sheldon, K. M., Arndt, J., & Houser-Marko, L. (2003). In search of the organismic valuing process: The human tendency to move towards beneficial goal choices. *Journal of Personality*. P. 835–869.

Лісова Лариса

ІМАЖИНАТИВНІ ТЕХНІКИ ЯК ІНСТРУМЕНТ РОЗКРИТТЯ ОСОБИСТОСТНОГО ПОТЕНЦІАЛУ В РОБОТІ З ОБДАРОВАНИМИ ДІТЬМИ В УМОВАХ ВОЄННОГО СТАНУ

Анотація.

Тривалий час перебуваючи на території військових дій, попри беззаперечну віру в перемогу та відбудову нашої країни після втрат, надзвичайно важливо зберегти та зміцнити найбільш цінний ресурс – людський капітал та інтелектуальний потенціал. У статті висвітлено актуальну тему підтримки обдарованих учнів у період особливо складних випробувань. Збереження, підтримка та розвиток їхнього потенціалу становлять основу для формування національної ідентичності та посилення інтелектуального надбання країни, що робить цю тему надзвичайно актуальною та стратегічно важливою. Автор обґрунтовано підкреслює, що обдарованість особистості є комплексним явищем, яке охоплює інтелектуальні здібності, послідовну та адаптивну соціальну поведінку, ефективні стратегії взаємодії та свідомий процес особистісного розвитку. Для розкриття та підтримки особистісного потенціалу обдарованої особистості автор пропонує долучити до методів психологічної підтримки імажинативні техніки.

Згідно з логотерапією та екзистенційним аналізом Віктора Франкла, імажинація вивільняє та зміцнює одну з фундаментальних характеристик особистості – свободу. За допомогою власної уяви (імажинації) людина може природним шляхом долати простір і час та проживати власні можливості, які вона ще не втілювала в життя. Процес імажинації може бути звернений у минуле і стати простором спогадів, у якому особистість може поглянути на пережитий досвід, поставити до нього сутнісні питання та віднайти власну осмислену позицію до пережитого. Заради майбутнього в процесі імажинації ми можемо відтворювати необмежену кількість уявних ситуацій, і свобода нашого вибору надасть нам можливість втілити в життя одну з них. У процесі імажинації людина проживає свої бажання, прагнення, страхи, творчі здібності. Імажинація може в буквальному сенсі врятувати життя людини, не дати їй зламатися в найнестерпніших умовах. Внутрішній світ людини, якщо вона спрямована на творення, може захистити її від зовнішніх картин світу в тому випадку, якщо світ зовнішній несе руйнування. Імажинація, окрім того, успішно допомагає людині змінити власні деструктивні установки, тобто подолати межі, що встановлені її власною свідомістю. Таким чином, у часи найчутливіших викликів і ситуацій, у якій людська свідомість перебуває в деформації сприйняття часу, власної волі та самого життя, як-то ситуація тривалого перебування на території воєнного стану, імажинативні техніки допомагають подолати прірву між бажаним та реальним і зміцнити силу духу та волю, перефокусовуючи особистість у простір її можливостей.

Ключові слова: *імажинація; обдарованість; логотерапія; Віктор Франкл; екзистенційний аналіз; освіта під час війни.*

Стаття надійшла до редколегії 12 листопада 2024 року