

L. S. Vygotsky and His Theory as an Inspiration for Innovations in Education

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Abstract

In recent years, preschool education has become an important topic in the Czech Republic. Since 1990, the system of preschool education has undergone a number of qualitative changes. A modern preschool curriculum has been created and is constantly being reviewed in line with the needs of society and educational policy objectives.

One of the problems of the past decade concerns the high number of pupils with postponed compulsory attendance. This has become a challenge for both teachers and researchers. One of the steps that could help was the enactment of compulsory preschool education in 2017. More attention should therefore be given to systematic preparation of children for starting compulsory education on the basis of individualization in education. However, this requires teachers to use high-quality educational diagnostics in order to ensure children's development with respect to their capabilities, interests and needs. A team of experts at the Faculty of Education at Palacký University is currently developing and validating an online application as an educational diagnostic instrument that should systematically monitor children's progress as well as highlight potential problems and eliminate them in time. In the development of the instrument, the team builds on the current trends in preschool education, a number of educational theories and the work of renowned authors (Rogers, Piaget, Bandura, etc.) An interesting and inspiring view of the development and education of preschool children is presented by social constructivism and its main proponent Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky, whose ideas and legacy are outlined in the present study.

Keywords: Vygotsky, preschool education, educational theories, theoretical study

1. Introduction

Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky (1896–1934) was born into a Belarusian Jewish family and, as paraphrased by Soukupová, nobody knew at that time that a “thinker with traits of a genius” was born who is sometimes called the Mozart of psychology (Soukupová, 2012, in Toulmin 1978, in Wertsch, 1985, p. 8). He grew up in difficult conditions, which certainly influenced the area of his expertise.

During his study at a Jewish Gimnasium he became interested in theatre and literature. He graduated with

a gold medal and then started studying law at a university in Moscow, which he finished in 1917. In parallel, he studied psychology, philosophy and history at Shanavsky non-state university. After graduation he returned to Gomel and worked as a history and literature teacher and contributed to the establishment of the psychological laboratory at the local teaching institute.

Vygotsky taught, gave lectures and published books. The key period in Vygotsky's scientific work was 1924, when after his presentation at the Second All-Russian Congress of Psychoneurology in Leningrad he was addressed by K. N. Kornilov, director of the Moscow Institute of Psychology, and offered a place at the institute.

The period between 1924 and 1934 is considered a highly productive time in Vygotsky's life. The period of the second half of the 1920s and 1930s was for many intellectuals a challenge for changes in education, which was also related to the high degree of illiteracy in the country. During this period, Vygotsky's team worked on speech development in children from different sociocultural backgrounds. His team included scholars such as Leontiev, Luria, Bozhovich and Zaporozhets. Vygotsky focused on children with various problems including deaf, blind or mentally retarded children. The area of defectology in Russia of that time stemmed from the problems of the country. This was contrary to western countries which focused rather on psychopathology, emotional problems and learning disorders. However, Russia faced the consequences of wars that left many orphans who became beggars and lived in groups of children with the same problems. The fight for survival changed into children's delinquency. Children were in an extremely poor health and mental condition. The system of care for children with disability was at the very beginning (Pipes, 1998, in Soukupová, 2012, pp. 47).

Vygotsky established the Laboratory of Psychology for Abnormal Childhood which later changed into the Institute of Defectology of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences. In the last years of his life, he worked on his book *Thought and Language* but died before its publication (Vygotsky, 2017, pp. 136–139).

Vygotsky's work was subject to ideological criticism and was even banned after his death. In 1936, a party resolution *On Pedagogical Aberrations in the System of the People's Commissariat of Education* was issued. The resolution suppressed the progressive theory of Soviet psychology and pedagogy. For years, Vygotsky's collaborators were silenced.

The situation changed only in 1956 when *Selected Psychological Works* was published accompanied by A. R. Luria and A. N. Leontiev's extensive study on Vygotsky's work. In parallel, *Thought and Language* was published as a separate book of *Psychology of Art*. In the 1980s, Vygotsky's work was issued as a six-volume collected publication.

Vygotsky experienced the period of absolutist Russia imbued with antisemitism, the dramatic revolutionary period, the war, the period of enthusiasm and faith in a better democratic society, but also the emergence of the Stalinist dictatorship. Although Vygotsky died relatively young of tuberculosis, his legacy particularly in developmental, educational and social psychology is exceptional and relevant today.

2. Cultural-Historical Theory of Development

Vygotsky is the author of a theoretical critique of biological naturalistic conceptions of man, to which he opposed his own theory of cultural-historical evolution. In order to understand Vygotsky's concept of the

zone of proximal development, one has to comprehend the principle of his cultural-historical theory of development.

2.1 On the Historical Nature of the Human Psyche

Vygotsky introduced into concrete psychological research the idea of the historicity of the nature of the human psyche. He considered the transformation of the natural mechanisms of psychological processes in the course of cultural-historical and ontogenetic development to be a necessary result of man's assimilation of the products of human culture in the process of association with other human beings around him.

He based his own research on the following two hypotheses:

1. On the mediated nature of man's psychic functions,
2. On the origin of internal mental processes from the originally external and interpsychological activity.

According to Vygotsky, the specifically human characteristics of the human psyche come into being as a result of the fact that previously direct natural processes are transformed into mediated processes thanks to the inclusion in behaviour of an intermediate link (stimulus, agent). "In the brain, simple elements are combined into a new 'unit'. A holistic process is created which can be imagined as the connections between the vertices of triangle A-B-X, where X is the peak, while the A-B connection symbolizes the formed mediated process. A-X and X-B are the elementary connections formed by the establishment of ordinary conditional reflexes. For example, in the case of mediated memorization, simple links are structurally unified through mnemotechnic X, while at other times this task is attributed to a word" (Vygotsky, 1929, in Leontiev 1966, p. 225).

The second hypothesis was expressed along with the first hypothesis. In this context, Vygotsky postulated that the mediated structure of the psychic process was originally formed in a context in which the mediating link had the form of an external stimulus. This theory made it possible to understand the social origin of the new structure, which does not arise from within, and is not self-invented, but is necessarily formed in social intercourse, which in the case of man is always mediated. The mediated structure of psychological processes always arises on the basis of the mastery by an individual human being of those forms of behaviour which originally developed as directly social forms of behaviour. The individual masters the link "stimulus—agent" which mediates the given process, whether it be a material agent, verbal concepts or, for example, symbols.

Thus, Vygotsky introduced another major theory into psychology: "The chief mechanism in the evolution of the human psyche is the assimilation of social historically developed types and forms of behaviour and their transformation into internal psychological processes" (Leontiev, 1966, pp. 224–226).

According to Vygotsky, artificially developed stimuli lead to the regulation of an individual's behaviour. In his theory, he uses the following concepts: sign, tool, cultural tool. What mediates psychological processes is referred to as a sign (for example language, numeration). The concept of sign is used as "having a meaning" in the psychological sense. People use auxiliary signs (for example, in a specific way they mark something they want to remember, Vygotsky's examples include making a notch in a piece of wood or tying a knot on a handkerchief), by doing which changes are made to the external environment. These are

changes that affect internal mental processes. People then have the ability of recall in memory and the processes of mediated remembering take the form of internal mental processes. In this way, individuals make changes to the external environment that affect their internal mental processes.

There is a double dependence between the structure of mental processes and their relationships, which results from the newly created mediated structure. The development of the relationships between these functions restructures the functions, including perception, attention and memory.

If people change the environment through their behaviour, they can also control their behaviour and their own mental processes. In this context, Vygotsky pronounced the following motto: “Natura parendo vincitur” which translates as “We can only control ourselves if we obey nature.” He also added the following Bacon’s thesis: “Nec manus, nisi intellectus, sibi permissus, multum valent: instrumentis et auxiliibus res perficitur” (*Neither the hand nor the intellect, on its own, yields much power; only through tools imbued with culture is this accomplished.) According to Vygotsky, the mediated nature of mental processes allows individuals to change the environment and thus control their behaviour, making human behaviour sensible and free (Vygotsky, 1970, p. 11).

According to Vygotsky, the mediated function is performed by sign and tool, where tool is the mediator that influences the external world, while sign is the mediator that influences the internal human world. In the same sense, he uses the term cultural tool, which changes the whole operation according to the characteristics of the tool, moves it to a higher level and extends its scope. Cultural tools affect the changes in the human psyche and consciousness. The original biologically conditioned psyche is thus transformed to culturally conditioned psyche. Cultural tools expand our capabilities and allow us to realize our potential which is latently present but otherwise inaccessible. Vygotsky introduces the idea of the sign and tool intersection, where the key aspect is the link between thought and speech, memory and thought as well as memory and speech (Vygotsky, 1976, in Soukupová, 2012, p. 67).

Vygotsky’s propositions were of great importance for psychology, especially at the time they were formulated. They were progressive because the idea of that time was that “mental functions are always determined and invariable (sensation, perception, memory, attention).”

2.2 Construct of the Zone of Proximal Development

When we observe children, we usually see the capabilities that were developed as part of the interaction between hereditary dispositions and the environment, but we are essentially interested in what children are able to do and what their potential would be without the limiting environmental conditions as these are never ideal. Vygotsky analysed cognitive abilities in terms development and interaction but also in terms of their measurement.

He was one of the advocates of the psychosocial learning model, where learning should not be “at the tail of development” and just adapt to maturation (Helus, 2009, p. 62). Should learning be beneficial, it needs to precede development because mental development is dependent on external stimuli. Cultural influences include teachers, parents, books—information mediated and transmitted through interactions.

Vygotsky’s idea is based on the assumption that an individual goes through a continuous development in unseparated stages. The transition period between two stages represents the potential for higher performance and is called the zone of proximal development (Sternberg, 2009, p. 482).

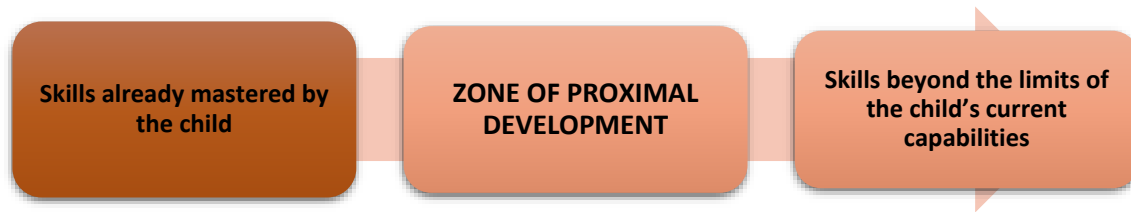


Figure 1. Zone of proximal development

The following levels (zones) of child development are distinguished:

1. Actual
2. Proximal development
3. Future

The actual zone represents the level where the child is right now. At this level, the child solves problems independently without external help. The level indicates the existing mature and complete functions. This level is not indicative of ongoing development or other development prospects.

The zone of proximal development represents the range between the child's observable level of capability (performance) and the child's latent capability, which is not entirely obvious.

The future level indicates where the child can move with the help of another person. From a developmental perspective, this stage is indicative of the child's maturing functions and state of readiness. At the same time, it covers the dynamics of the child's development and other perspectives (Šmelová, 2019, p. 60). These two levels should inform the teacher about the child's development and education.

As suggested by Blížkovský (1992, p. 92–95), uncovering the potentialities of the development and education of another person or oneself is not easy. A significant role is played by the environment in which the individual lives. The environment can have both positive and negative effects. An important aspect is the stimulating nature of the environment and a sufficient amount of material, social and cultural stimuli under which both the inherent and acquired potential transforms into the real traits and capabilities. In the case of an unfavourable environment, developmental possibilities remain unrealized.

In terms of self-assessment of one's capabilities, some people tend to underestimate or overestimate themselves, which may be related to the fact that they set high standards for themselves. An immature person tends to have vague ideas. Not even adult persons are always aware of their real potential.

The zone of proximal development provides a space for development—for the better or for the worse. It represents the stage of the child's development which can be reached only with the help of another person in the context of social cooperation. According to Vygotsky, effective learning influences the functions that are still maturing, not those that are already mature.

The zone of proximal development is mostly linked to the period of childhood. However, it can also be considered from a general perspective as a potential of the human psyche which is undergoing constant changes in the context of social interactions and available cultural tools (Berk, 2013, p. 225–226).

3. Vygotsky's Thoughts in the Context of Contemporary Preschool Education

The purpose of this section is to reflect on selected Vygotsky's ideas in the context of the contemporary preschool education with an emphasis on the development of children's potentialities. Special focus is on social interaction, assessment of children's development and children's play.

3.1 Social Interactions as a Significant Factor of Child Development

As an advocate of the sociocultural theory, Vygotsky emphasised the development of mental functions and the factors that support their development. He believed that the most important aspect was support and guidance provided by adults, especially parents, while in the context of educational institution this role is taken by teachers. The quality of these interactions is decisive for the development of the child and the child's ideas about the world and the self. In this sense, the child is not treated as a mere object. According to Vygotsky, the child is a social being who lives in a specific environment, in a community of adults and children who influence the child's attitude to the surrounding world and mediate the child's knowledge. The child learns about the world not only through others, but also through one's observation, discovery, experimentation, etc. The knowledge presented to the child must be appropriate to their understanding. As far as the development of higher functions is concerned, it is important to instil new ways of thinking and problem solving which can be adopted by the child if guided properly on the basis of appropriate contexts as well as general principles. Individual cognitive competences appear only as a result of the interaction with other people from whom they learn (Vágnerová, 2012, p. 50).

According to Vygotsky, the environment has to be considered not objectively and statically but relatively and dynamically. According to the author, the crucial aspect in both development and education is the child's own activity, for which appropriate conditions must be provided.

Although teachers have the key role in the process of education, the dialogue in the interaction between the educator and the educated must not be neglected. In this context, the educational process supports conscious activity and self-actualization. The teacher monitors the child's progress and responds in an adequate way, knowing that the newly created qualities are accompanied by the disappearance of the previous stages.

The discrepancies described above can be overcome in the educational process. More systematic and goal-directed encouragement of children's education in the context of the zone of proximal development as well as responding to children's needs according to their objectives, interests, wishes, aspirations, self-actualization tendencies, etc. increases the effectiveness of the educational process. To put it simply, only what is in the zone of proximal development today can be realized in the actual zone tomorrow (Blížkovský, 1992, p. 97).

Social Interactions in the Context of the Preschool Curriculum

As has already been mentioned, the quality of the environment is an important factor that has both positive and negative effects on children's development. This leads to interactions that can be of various nature. These may be social (interpersonal) interactions but also contact with inanimate objects or symbols. This leads to a process in which the development of the child is both stimulated and modified, under the influence of all environmental elements of varying degrees and quality. The role of the environment is to

develop these interactions and communications, which embed and develop all of the higher functions. The current preschool curriculum emphasizes the quality of the environment, not only in terms of material and psychosocial conditions but emphasis is on social interactions within a controlled educational process as well as daily interpersonal communication between children and adults. The pre-school is considered a very important environment for the realization of social situations. Preschool children are often exposed to social formation and communicative demands in everyday interactions with adults, which cause confusion and uncertainty. This can be inappropriately reflected in children's activities in the form of routine. Therefore, involvement of an adult in children's life worlds is important. The adult-child interaction is a feature of a friendly culture (Provázková Stolinská, Rašková, Šmelová, 2017). This is evidenced by the preschool curriculum.

For example, teachers are responsible for ensuring the following:

- The kindergarten disposes of sufficient area (floor space, air volume etc. in compliance with relevant regulation) and such spatial arrangement that suits various group and individual child activities;
- All the activities are organised in such a way that encourages the children to their own activity and experiments, to participate in activities organisation, to work at their own pace, etc.;
- Conditions for individual, group and frontal activities are created, the children can participate in collective activities in small, medium as well as large groups;
- Activities scheduling is based on the needs and interests of the children, and accommodates individual educational needs and limits of the children (FEP PE, p. 33).

The objectives of the preschool curriculum are defined in a way to develop the whole personality of the child in the physical, mental as well as social areas. Emphasis is also on the process in which the educated gradually becomes "self-educator and educator of others."

In terms of their general nature, the objectives of the curriculum are formulated at various levels. One of the categories includes the key competences that the child should achieve at the end of preschool education. For example, in the social and interpersonal areas, the child should achieve the following before starting compulsory education:

- Independently decides on his/her activities; can establish his/her own opinion and express it;
- Realizes that s/he is accountable for his/her actions and can be held responsible;
- In everyday situations applies basic social habits and rules of social intercourse; is able to respect others, negotiate, accept and enter into compromises;
- Imitates models of pro-social behaviour and interpersonal relationships observed among others;

Another area relates to the problem-solving competence. The child at the end of preschool education:

- Notices events and issues in the immediate vicinity; positive response to active interests naturally motivates him/her to continue facing new challenges;
- Solves problems through immediate experience; advances through trial and error, tests, experiments;

spontaneously invents new solutions to problems and situations; searches for different options and variations (has his/her own original ideas); makes use of experience and imagination; uses a logical, mathematical and empiric approach to challenge theoretical and practical problems; understands basic algorithms in solving various problems and situations and uses them in new situations;

- Begins to comprehend numerical concepts, uses numbers and mathematical concepts, identifies elementary mathematical relations (FEP PE 2018, p. 12).

In preschool education, the teacher performs deliberate and systematic activities in order to teach the child to live in a usual social environment, comprehend the environment and resolve problems, not as a passive object but as an active subject on the principles of reciprocity.

An active attitude of the child to the external world and to the self is reflected in the child's personality as a tension between the zones. This tension between the actual state and future state represents the dynamic force for the child's activities. In the context of the educational process, this relationship includes the existing level, set objectives (competences) and activities.

The most important persons in children's education are adults (teachers, parents, grandparents, etc.) According to Vygotsky, the quality of early relationships between the child and the adult is decisive for the emergence of higher functions. A significant role is played by close cooperation between parents and teachers because the teacher-child relationship is strengthened (Bruceová, 1996, p. 59).

The preschool curriculum places special attention on the family and the school. For example, the curriculum defines the following teachers' responsibilities:

- The parents have the possibility to participate in the kindergarten's events and various programmes, and to join their children's games if they wish. They are regularly and sufficiently informed about everything that happens in the kindergarten. If they show interest, they can participate in designing the kindergarten's programme, in problem-solving, etc.;
- The teachers inform the parents of their child's results as well as their individual progress in development and learning;
- They consult the parents about the joint efforts in their child's upbringing and education. (FEP PE, 2018 p. 33).

The examples above are a clear reflection of Vygotsky's ideas and his sociocultural theory. The curriculum reflects the significant influence of the environment and all factors relevant to the development of the child. In this context, the teacher should be aware of the environment from which the child comes to the kindergarten, whether the environment is stimulating or not and whether the kindergarten should make an intervention.

An important role of each kindergarten is child socialization. Children learn appropriate behaviour, adopt new knowledge and skills, learn to understand what is right and what is wrong. Children's opinions are created and changed under the influence of the sociocultural environment; they are socially constructed (Mareš, 2013, p. 40).

The preschool curriculum reflects Vygotsky's psychological theory on the development of the human psyche, which is based on the influence of culture on higher mental functions, where this culture is produced by people's social activities, both in terms of human history and mental development of an individual. The adult-child relationship is an important precondition for the child's mental development, where the social and later psychological competence of an individual is generated. This explains one of the fundamental Vygotsky's ideas that learning precedes child's development (Pupala in Kolláriková, Pupala 2001, p. 203).

3.2 Zone of Proximal Development in the Context of Dynamic Diagnostics

The principle of the educational process is systematic and targeted educational work consistent with the objectives defined in the curriculum. The teacher's educational activity is directly related to continuous evaluation of operational objectives. The child's progress is continuously evaluated, higher objectives are set and educational activities planned and implemented under specific conditions (external and internal). The preparation of the activities must correspond with and at the same time respect the child's level, interests and needs. Naturally, these must be known to the teacher.

The teacher plans further activities according to the assessment of the child's knowledge, skills and abilities. Educational diagnostics is usually performed in a static assessment environment, where the teacher talks to the child, asks questions and examines what the child is able to resolve. This provides an idea about the child's level. However, this is insufficient. According to Vygotsky, the static assessment environment must be changed into a dynamic assessment environment. In this case, the teacher is interested not only in the child's responses and in what the child can do correctly or incorrectly but in the case of an incorrect answer or incorrect solution can provide the child with a series of advice to help resolve the problem. The ability of the child to follow step-by-step advice informs about the child's development potential in the "examination—testing" period, i.e., how the child can develop beyond one's observable abilities. In this way, the teacher can go beyond the observed child's performance (Sternberg, 2009, p. 483).

Presently, this approach is referred to as the dynamic diagnostics, which takes place within the teacher-child interaction and includes both an educational dimension and especially an intervention dimension. This is consistent with Pupala, who claims that the dynamic diagnostics is a "prototype or model of an effective educational situation which is of a developmental and creative nature" (Kolláriková, Pupala, 2001, p. 201) The model can also be used when the teacher prepares tasks that require adult assistance.

The principles of assessment of the child's development in preschool education are set out in the curriculum.

- Regarding the evaluation of educational results, in preschool education this is not a question of the assessment of the child and their performance in relation to a given norm or a question of comparing individual children and their performance;
- As a result of individualization of education, it is necessary to monitor the development and personal educational progress of each individual child and to document them. The teacher should perform daily, long-term and systematic monitoring. No less important purpose of the continuous evaluation is to detect the child's potential problems and weaknesses in time and draw expert-based conclusions for their elimination and the child's further development. If required, timely intervention with necessary professional assistance should be provided (FEP PE, 2018, p. 33).

According to the text above, perfect knowledge of the child is one of the basic responsibilities of kindergarten teachers. This responsibility is directly imposed by the preschool curriculum. The question is to what extent this is accomplished. A stimulating approach is the already mentioned “effective didactic situation model” where the teacher not only examines the level of the child in the zone of proximal development and the child’s further development including prognoses but at the same time encourages, intervenes and supports the child’s development and thus moves the border of the zone of proximal development.

Educators should not accelerate the child’s development but use the child’s potentialities as much as possible.

3.3 Play as the Most Natural Activity of Preschool Child

Play is the most natural activity in the preschool period. This is also confirmed by Vygotsky. He considers play an activity that allows the child go beyond one’s current capabilities. He believes that this is related to the emergence of new needs and motives based on the currently unattainable possibilities and desires of a permanent nature.

At this age, an important aspect is imaginative play, which relieves the child of the pressure of reality and develops and practices the child’s self-control. Bruce (1996, p. 133) considers the zone of proximal development in the context imaginative play: “If Vygotsky’s concept of the zones of proximal development is true, collective imaginative play of children from three to seven years of age in a meaningful, embedded and specific context is a good opportunity for them to keep in their minds several facts—thoughts at once.”

Everybody can imagine children playing “shopping” in the school garden. They do not have the goods, money or other requisites but can do without them. Leaves from trees are used as money, bigger leaves are folded and used as a wallet, while little pieces of wood and stones are used as goods.

In this way, an object is assigned a different meaning compared with reality. Clearly, children are capable of operations at the highest level of thought provided that things or events are in a meaningful context. According to Vygotsky, in a meaningful context, in which children’s play usually takes place, children can show a considerable degree of self-control not to spoil the play. When children get involved in play, they set aside what they personally desire and are able to comply with the rules and accept different roles.

Vygotsky believes in the importance of imaginative creativity because at the age of five to eleven years this ability can be greatly developed in the musical, dramatic, visual or other areas.

He also believes that play is crucial to children’s representation because of the importance of self-control and the difference between the real and potential child development. He considers play in preschool age to be an ideal stimulation of the child’s personality structures, which develop and will become future personality structures.

According to Vygotsky, another important aspect is group play, which is involved in the development of the ability of decentration (empathizing). This is one of the essential competences that the teacher needs to focus on in the process of education, see below:

- The child expresses sensitivity and respect for others in a children’s way, helps the weaker, is able to express him/herself and submit to the others in a group, in joint activities tries to reach an

agreement (FEP PE, 2018, p. 15).

Decentration is one of the key abilities for life in society. These areas are defined in the following educational areas of the curriculum (2018): A child and the other person, A child and society. For example, the child should be able to give up one's wishes for the benefit of others in order to obtain greater satisfaction from the reward.

In order to achieve this, adults must be able to provide children with love, safety, background, mediation of experiences but also the awareness that one must not only "take" but must also be able to "give".

The preschool curriculum sets out the following teachers' responsibilities:

- Different qualities and opportunities for development require the application of appropriate methods and forms of work in preschool education;
- Learning through experience and cooperative learning through games and activities is a suitable teaching method based on direct experience of each child, encouraging his/her curiosity and need to discover. It also encourages the child to enjoy learning, enhances his interest in learning new things, gaining experience and other skills;
- Education needs to use children's natural flow of ideas and spontaneous ideas, and give them enough space for spontaneous activities and their own plans. Teaching activities should therefore have a form of a fun children game children like and enjoy playing without being forced (FEP PE, 2018 p. 8).

Children's skills need to be considered as unstable and variable. For teachers this means that it is not only important what the child can do but they need to think about the child's capabilities in the context of the key competences which represent a specific objective of preschool education. This is also related to the assessment of the child's future development. In this context, an inspiring approach is the "dynamic diagnostics" model. The knowledge about the zone of proximal development can be used in preschool education in the context of daily activities where the most important place is occupied by children's play. The preschool curriculum places great emphasis on individualization in education, which requires the teacher to address the needs of each child, think about their interests, needs as well as capabilities. The teacher should also focus on the intellectual processes used by the child to achieve success. The teacher must think about the procedures that the child uses, any mistakes made by the child, the child's ability to concentrate, etc. The teacher should use tasks to support the development of children's thinking, enrich their intellectual and working strategies and use feedback in error handling, which represents a source of further development of the child.

Discussion

The work of Vygotsky is broadly applicable in the area of education and upbringing. He did not define any educational strategy but his work provided a background for their designing. A number of methods have been developed, focusing particularly on the social context of teaching. These include for example

reciprocal learning, which is a cooperative system of learning reading in a small group with a changing role of the teacher focused on text comprehension, or the Fifth Dimension Project, an extracurricular education project focused on cooperation, play, imagination and motivation for learning (Daniels, 2007, in Soukupová 2012, p. 119).

The Framework Education Programme for Preschool Education (2018) is a modern curriculum based on the knowledge of contemporary science. As a result, preschool education is affected by the ideas of many significant professionals from the area of education and psychology. Worth mentioning are the proponents of the cognitive psychological theory (notably Piaget) and socio-cognitive theory (especially Bandura, Bruner) including Vygotsky. In the case of the social cognitive theory, this applies especially to social and cultural interactions that affect contemporary education and didactics (Bertrand, 1998, p. 18). Vygotsky's legacy is timeless and evokes positive as well as critical reactions.

Conclusion

Even today, Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky is considered a significant author who influenced developmental, social as well as cultural psychology and education throughout the world. Logically, his ideas are reflected in the current system of preschool education. In this paper, Vygotsky's ideas are presented not as a dogma but rather as a source of inspiration. At the same time, the paper touched upon the areas where Vygotsky's ideas are present.

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