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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24195/2414-4665-2017-7-3>**Natalia Tsybuliak,***PhD (Candidate of Psychological Sciences), associate professor,  
Department of Applied Psychology and Speech-Language Pathology,  
Berdyansk State Pedagogical University,  
4, Shmidta Str., Berdiansk, Ukraine*

## TYPES OF PROFESSIONAL OBSERVATION SKILLS OF FUTURE PRESCHOOL TEACHERS

*The paper presents the results of theoretical and empirical study of future preschool teachers' professional observation skills. The latter are considered as the basis for understanding children's personal characteristics, which makes them particularly important among the professional qualities of a preschool teacher. The following methods were applied: theoretical (analysis, synthesis, generalisation of scientific literature); empirical (observation, questioning, testing); statistical (comparative and correlation analysis); interpretative (analysis, synthesis, systematisation of the data obtained). 234 third- and fourth-year students majoring in preschool education (6.010101) became participants of the study. Professional observation skills are considered as a professionally important quality, which involves fixation and interpretation of significant, typical and even barely noticeable external demonstrations of educational process participants' personal characteristics. It has the following functions: research, organisational, motivative, prognostic, controlling, regulatory or correctional. Professional observation skills are characterised by the following structural components: motivational and target-oriented, cognitive, operational. The data obtained have made it possible to distinguish and characterise the types of future preschool teachers' professional observation skills (perceptive, standard, potential, and superficial). It has been found that most of the students under study have the potential type, which is manifested in their desire and ability to notice personal characteristics of children, parents and colleagues. However, they make mistakes in interpretation of these demonstrations. These peculiarities indicate the need and opportunity for purposeful development of professional observation skills at the stage of future preschool teachers' preparation for future work.*

**Keywords:** *professional observation skills (perceptive, standard, potential, and superficial), professionally important quality, preschool teacher.*

### Introduction

Changes in the national policy concerning preschool education raise the requirements for preschool teachers' professional competence. The latter involves mastering necessary knowledge, abilities and skills, as well as development of a number of professionally important qualities. Observation skills are particularly important among the latter; being the basis for cognition and the understanding of child's individual uniqueness, they guarantee humanisation and individualisation of the educational process of a preschool institution, determine success, efficiency and progress of pedagogical activity.

Review of psycho-pedagogical literature shows interest in the issues of observation skills and diversity of approaches to understanding the essence of this concept. It is considered as an ability (S. Holovin, H. Kostiuk), personal quality (S. Maksymenko, D. Nikolenko et al.), personality trait (M. Hamezo, O. Petrova et al.), a component of socio-perceptual competence of a specialist (V. Zazykin, I. Kulkova et al.). The researchers' attention is focused on works, where observation skills are defined as a professionally important quality of representatives of different jobs: public employees (Yu. Tereshchenko, D. Nikolenko et al.), lawyers (I. Abakumova, O. Stoliarenko et al.), psychologists (L. Rehus, V. Kovalov, V. Kuzmenko et al.), teachers (H. Kyslova, L. Kolodina, V. Lezhnina,

T. Mandrykina, O. Telieieva et al.). In particular, when studying future teachers' observation skills, the following aspects have been revealed: psychological peculiarities of their formation (H. Kyslova), impact of observation skills on the effectiveness of pedagogical interaction (L. Kolodina), interrelation between their demonstration and accuracy of empirical predication (V. Lezhnina), pedagogical features of forming observation skills in communication process (T. Mandrykina), effectiveness of using training exercises for their development (O. Telieieva).

Despite a great number of research works devoted to this issue, there is the lack of fundamental works concerning the development of observation skills in future preschool teachers. Studying this issue will make it possible to adjust differences between contemporary requirements to observation skills demonstration and theoretical justification, as well as actual practice of their development in the process of training future preschool teachers; the need for methodical support of these skills development and insufficient working out of corresponding recommendations and methodological support.

**The aim of the paper** is theoretical and experimental determination and characterisation of the types of future preschool teachers' professional observation skills.

The tasks of the paper: 1) theoretical analysis of the concept "professional observation skills", determining the

significance of these skills for pedagogical activity; 2) experimental study of psychological features of demonstrating professional observation skills by future preschool teachers; 3) determining and characterising the types of future preschool teachers' professional observation skills.

### Research methods

To attain the aim of the paper and complete the formulated tasks, we have developed a research programme, which involved the use of the following methods:

- theoretical (analysis, synthesis, the summarising of scientific literature on the problem of the research);
- empirical (observation, questioning, testing, namely: "Correction task" (B. Burdon, modified by V. Anfimov), "Evaluation of perception capacity", "Elimination method", "Complicated analogy", "Comparison of notions", "Distinguishing essential features" (A. Malenov), "Memory for images" and "Long-term memory" (L. Stoliarenko), "Socio-perceptual observation skills" (M. Kiloshenko), "Expression groups" (J. Gilford and M. Sullivan, modified by O. Mykhailova), "Diagnostics of the level of development of abilities for proper interpretation of nonverbal behaviour" (V. Labunska), "Significance of observation skills for preschool teachers' work";
- statistical (comparative and correlation analysis);
- interpretative (analysis, synthesis, systematisation of the data obtained).

The research was conducted at Berdyansk State Pedagogical University, Mariupol State University, Rivne State Humanitarian University, T. H. Shevchenko Chernihiv National Pedagogical University. 234 third- and fourth-year students majoring in preschool education (6.010101) became participants of the research.

### Discussion

The concept "observation skills" is widely and frequently used in psycho-pedagogical literature. Our research is focused on works, where observation skills are considered in the system "man-to-man". Most scientists (I. Bekh, O. Bodalov, V. Zazykin, L. Kolodina, A. Markova et al.) define observation skills as human capability for proper perception and evaluation of the main parameters of interpersonal relations. In this case, proper perception and evaluation involves the ability for forming correct opinion about other people. As noted by A. Markova, observation skills are "capability for 'reading' another person as a book according to his/her expressive motions" [3, p. 24]. In I. Bekh's opinion, observation skills are "capability for noticing barely visible, but psychologically significant details in person's behaviour" [1, p. 44]. O. Bodalov emphasises that observation skills make it possible to "deeply and precisely understand the main features of other person's inner world, successfully evaluate him/her as a personality or subject of activity and note his/her uniqueness" [2, p. 19].

Taking into consideration the specific character of preschool teacher's work, observation skills should be considered as a professionally important quality, which

involves fixation and interpretation of significant, typical and even barely noticeable, but important for understanding individual features of educational process participants (children, parents, colleagues) [4].

A number of research works (by J. Jablon, N. Lysenko, T. Mandrykina, M. Savchyn et al.) are focused on the significance of preschool teachers' professional observation skills for forecasting and development of a child personality, establishing collaboration with parents and colleagues as well as for their own professional self-development and self-improvement. For example, observation skills are oriented, first of all, at creating favourable conditions for children's mental development, keeping their individualities, maintaining psychological health, revealing and developing talents, etc. Interaction between teachers and families is of great importance for coping with these tasks. Apart from children and parents, educators must understand peculiarities of adults who have influence on child personality's development at preschool educational institution (a preschool teacher, a preschool teacher's assistant, a Music teacher and others). In particular, the ability to determine and consider colleagues' emotional states determines the unity of requirements imposed on children as well as psychological climate, where children and teachers spend their day.

In accordance with such an approach, peculiarities of demonstrating professional observation skills by preschool teachers affect the success and effectiveness of performing the following functions:

- research – collection, analysis, systematisation and classification of important information concerning individually psychological peculiarities of preschool children (temperament types, psychoemotional state, self-esteem, personal qualities, preferences, interests, etc.);
- organisational – most appropriate organisation of various types of children's activities, taking their individual features into account;
- motivative – creating and providing favourable conditions for child's harmonious development (mental, physical, social, etc.), which requires teachers' continuous self-improvement;
- prognostic – predicting results and consequences of one's professional activities;
- controlling – studying children in the context of educational work with them, i.e. specifying personal characteristics of their development in close relation with the organising and providing of teaching process, particularly the reasons that impede achievement of the desired level of personal qualities and traits development, and factors that contribute to successful achievement of goals, etc.;
- regulatory (or correctional) – quick revealing of differences between the tasks of preschool education and the state of their overcoming, which provides the most appropriate changing of a situation [4].

Consequently, professional observation skills of preschool teachers are the basis for understanding individuality and uniqueness of each child. Their significance

proves the need for its purposeful development. The stage of professional training of future specialists is of great importance for this process (A. Derkach, H. Ball, E. Zeier, S. Maksymenko, P. Perepelytsia, Yu. Povarenkov, V. Shadrykov et al.). Therefore, it is important to find out existing peculiarities of demonstrating professional observation skills by future preschool teachers. This task implies revealing the inner structure of this quality.

On the basis of theoretical analysis of research works devoted to the issues of professional observation skills (L. Rehush, H. Kyslova, V. Kovalov, D. Nikolenko, M. Sherin et al.) the structure of this quality and criteria for its studying have been specified:

- the motivational and target-oriented component (criterion – incentives and goals of their demonstration);
- the cognitive component (criterion – maturity of cognitive mental processes that form the basis for observation skills);
- the operational component (criterion – maturity of necessary and adequate actions related to the determining, differentiation, comparison and adequate interpretation of demonstrations of children's individual uniqueness).

The empirical study of psychological peculiarities of demonstrations of preschool teachers' professional observation skills was based on the above-mentioned structure. Below is the characteristics of the empirical data obtained.

According to the criterion “incentives and goals of their demonstration”, we have found that 7.27% of future preschool teachers had the high level of its development, 29.06% had the adequate level, 53.42% – the critical level, 10.25% – the unacceptable level. The results obtained make it possible to state that the majority of students under study are characterised by domination of extrinsic motives and formal goals of demonstrating observation skills, insufficient maturity of focus on studying and understanding personal characteristics of the participants of the educational process of a preschool educational institution. The students do not express stable professional interest in fixation and interpretation of external demonstrations of personal characteristics of a child (parents and teachers in particular). The above-mentioned feature of professional observation skills demonstrates students' insufficient motivation and focus on their actualisation for studying and understanding preschool children's personal characteristics.

The results obtained according to the criterion “maturity of cognitive mental processes that form the basis for observation skills” show that 3.42% of future preschool teachers are characterised by the high level of its development, 48.29% – by the adequate level, 40.17% – the critical level, and 8.12% – by the unacceptable one. Consequently, the majority of the students under study are characterised by sufficient indicators of the capacity of perception and perceptivity; concentration, stability and distribution of attention; image and long-term memory; analysis, synthesis, comparison, abstraction, and generalisation. These features indicate potential opportunity of

observation skills demonstration by future preschool teachers in their work.

The criterion “maturity of necessary and adequate actions concerning determining, differentiation, comparison and adequate interpretation of demonstrations of children's individual uniqueness” is developed at the high level in 8.97% of the surveyed, at the adequate level – in 22.65%, at the critical one – in 50.85%, and at the unacceptable level – in 17.53%. These results make it possible to state that the majority of the students are able to determine significant and typical external demonstrations of personal characteristics of an individual. However, they make a great number of mistakes when comparing, differentiating, and explaining them. For this reason, it will be difficult for them to identify children's personal characteristics.

Comparative analysis of the indicators of structural components of future preschool teachers' observation skills according to the specified criteria enables us to state that the highest indicators were found when studying the cognitive component and the lowest – the operational one. The empirical data indicate that the students are able to activate cognitive mental processes that are the basis for professional observation skills at the sufficient level. However, domination of extrinsic motives and formal goals of their demonstration leads to their insufficient mastering of actions required for fixation and adequate interpretation of significant, typical, and especially barely visible external demonstrations of personal characteristics of the participants of the educational process of a preschool institution.

In our study, it was important to specify interrelation between the structural components of future teachers' professional observation skills. For this purpose, we have calculated Pearson correlation coefficient. The results indicate that there is a statistical dependence between all the components of this quality: the motivational and target-oriented component and the cognitive one – 0.858; the motivational and target-oriented component and the operational one – 0.907; the cognitive component and the operational one – 0.826 ( $p < 0.01$ ). The high indicators of significant correlation between these metric variables demonstrate the existence of close functional and structural relationships. For example, students' mastering of necessary and adequate actions (the operational component) depends on professional need, motive and goals of demonstrating professional observation skills, as well as interest in and focus on studying and understanding personal characteristics of the participants of the educational process of a preschool institution (the motivational and target-oriented component). At the same time, subjective importance and understanding of the necessity of professional observation skills for teacher's work (the motivational and target-oriented component) activates and focuses perception, attention, memory, thinking, which are necessary for fixation and interpretation of external demonstrations of personal characteristics of children, parents and teachers (the cognitive component).

Having analysed of psychological peculiarities of demonstration of professional observation skills by future preschool teachers, considering the level of development and balance of this quality's structural components, the following types of professional observation skills can be distinguished and characterised: perceptive (8.97%), standard (28.63%), potential (53.43%), and superficial (8.97%). Every type is characterised by its defining characteristics. Let us consider them in details.

The perceptive type is characterised by well-balanced development of the motivational and target-oriented, cognitive and operational components, which are demonstrated in various types of professional activities consistently and at the high level; domination of students' motives and goals; the high level of development of cognitive mental processes that form the basis for this quality. Maturity of the ability to distinguish personality's external demonstrations precisely, establish interrelations between them and interpret them adequately is observed. These preschool teachers are able to detect and understand significant, typical and barely visible demonstrations of personal characteristics peculiar to the participants of the educational process of a preschool institution. It becomes the basis for relatively precise prediction of their intents, actions and deeds, development of events, situations, processes and phenomena under real-life conditions at a preschool educational institution. For this reason, this very type of future preschool teachers' professional observation skills is the most preferable one for successful, efficient and impactful fulfilment of their professional duties.

The standard type of professional observation skills is characterised by domination of students' cognitive motives and goals of their demonstration in professional activities. Future teachers with this type of observation skills invest their efforts not "for the sake of children" (e.g. creating conditions, revealing child's potential and capabilities, etc.), but "for the sake of themselves" ("I wonder why it is happening", "What if..."). In general, the students are characterised by sufficient level of development of cognitive mental processes that form the basis for professional observation skills. However, unreasonable succession of detecting and interpreting personality's external demonstrations is observed, which results in mistakes in understanding one's personal characteristics. It enables future preschool teachers to distinguish and analyse significant and typical external demonstrations of the participants of the educational process of a preschool institution, but makes it difficult for them to notice barely visible changes of their mental state, behaviour, etc. In this case, details and nuances are not always interesting for the students, as long as they often attach little importance to them. The most important thing for them is to perform their professional duties at the standard level.

The potential type of professional observation skills is observed in case future preschool teachers are eager to learn and understand the participants of the educational process of a preschool institution for creating and provid-

ing favourable conditions for children's harmonious development. It is characterised by sufficient level of development of cognitive processes which are the basis for professional observation skills. That is why future preschool teachers want and are able to notice personal characteristics of children (parents, colleagues), but make mistakes in their interpretation. It is explained by insufficient formation of the ability to detect necessary and sufficient external demonstrations of a personality, their differentiation, comparison and interpretation. In this case, it is possible to change the situation in terms of its harmonisation by means of purposeful work on the development of one's own professional observation skills.

The superficial type of professional observation skills is characterised by the fact that future preschool teachers do not understand the importance and necessity for learning and understanding personal characteristics of children (parents, colleagues) for performing their professional duties. These students have insufficient level of development of cognitive mental processes which are the basis for professional observation skills; need outside activation and control. Future preschool teachers tend to notice only separate, the most noticeable demonstrations of personality's characteristics; analyse, compare and interpret them in quite a superficial manner. The above-mentioned features have negative impact on the organisation and providing of educational process, as long as preschool teachers with superficial observation skills in most cases neither notice, nor understand even significant and typical external demonstrations of children's personal characteristics.

These types of professional observation skills of future preschool teachers make it possible to understand the existing difficulties and find ways for their purposeful overcoming at the stage of preparation for preschool teacher's work.

### Conclusions

Theoretical and experimental study of the issue of professional observation skills of preschool teachers enables us to draw the following conclusions:

- the essence of professional observation skills involves fixation and interpretation of significant, typical and even barely visible external demonstrations of personal characteristics of the participants of the educational process of a preschool educational institutions (children, parents, teachers);

- professional observation skills are particularly important in the structure of professionally important qualities of future preschool teachers; they are the basis for learning and understanding personal characteristics of the participants of the educational process of a preschool institution, determine success and efficiency of performing a number of professional functions (research, organisational, motivative, prognostic, controlling, regulatory or correctional);

- the main types of preschool teachers' observation skills are perceptive, standard, potential and superficial;

- most of the students majoring in preschool education have the potential type of professional observation skills, which indicates the need and opportunity for its purposeful development at the stage of preparing for future work.

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Further research work is supposed to be aimed at implementing the system of integrated work on the development of professional observation skills in training future preschool teachers.

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**Наталя Юрїївна Цибуляк,**

кандидат психологічних наук, доцент кафедри прикладної психології та логопедії,  
Бердянський державний педагогічний університет,  
вул. Шмідта, 4, м. Бердянськ, Україна

#### ТИПИ ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ СПОСТЕРЕЖЛИВОСТІ МАЙБУТНІХ ВИХОВАТЕЛІВ ДОШКІЛЬНИХ НАВЧАЛЬНИХ ЗАКЛАДІВ

Основою пізнання та розуміння індивідуальних особливостей дітей виступає професійна спостережливості вихователів дошкільних навчальних закладів. Тільки спостережливі педагоги здатні до гуманізації та індивідуалізації освітнього процесу, їхня діяльність характеризується успішністю, ефективністю та результативністю. Тому одним із завдань фахової підготовки компетентних вихователів має бути розвиток їхньої професійної спостережливості. Для цього важливо визначити та характеризувати її типи. Для досягнення мети та розв'язання поставлених завдань було використання комплексу методів: теоретичних (аналіз, синтез, узагальнення наукової літератури з проблеми дослідження); емпіричних (спостереження, опитування та тестування); статистичних (порівняльний та кореляційний аналіз); інтерпретаційних (аналіз, синтез, систематизація отриманих даних). Учасниками експерименту стали 234 студенти III і IV років навчання напряму підготовки 6.010101 «Дошкільна освіта». Професійну спостережливості варто розглядати як професійно важливу якість майбутніх вихователів, сутність яка полягає у фіксації та інтерпретації суттєвих, характерних і навіть малопомітних зовнішніх проявів індивідуальних особливостей суб'єктів освітнього процесу дошкільних навчальних закладів (дітей, батьків, педагогів). Її функціями є: дослідницька, організаторська, стимулювальна, прогностична, контрольна, регулювальна та коригувальна. Структурними компонентами професійної спостережливості майбутніх педагогів і критеріями її визначення є: мотиваційно-цільовий (критерій – сформованість професійні мотивів і цілей її прояву), когнітивний (критерій – розвиненість пізнавальних процесів) і операційний (критерій – сфор-

мованість необхідних і достатніх способів дій). Отримані експериментальні дані дали можливість уперше визначити та схарактеризувати типи професійної спостережливості майбутніх вихователів дошкільних навчальних закладів (проникливий, нормативний, потенційний та поверховий). Встановлено, що у студентів домінує потенційний тип, який проявляється у їхньому прагненні та можливості помічати індивідуальні особливості дітей (батьків, колег). Але майбутніх педагоги при цьому допускають помилки в процесі інтерпретації цих проявів. Це зумовлено недостатньою сформованістю здатності до визначення необхідних і достатніх розпізнавальних зовнішніх проявів особистості, їх диференціації, порівняння та інтерпретації. Ці особливості прояву професійної спостережливості майбутніх фахівців вказують на необхідність і можливість її цілеспрямованого розвитку на етапі фахової підготовки.

**Ключові слова:** професійна спостережливість (прониклива, нормативна, потенційна, поверхова), професійно важлива якість, вихователь дошкільних навчальних закладів.

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