

Designing the “Self—Concept of Creative Self-Development” of Students during the Training Process in Pedagogics

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Abstract

Actuality of the matter under investigation is stipulated by the necessity of exploring the issues of development of “Self-concept of creative self-development” of students, which can be defined not only as the “Theory of Self” or as the effect of realization of one’s own “Self”, but also as the regulation mechanism of all types of creative activity of a human being. The purpose of this article is to analyze and systemize pedagogical conditions of effective development of the “Self-concept of Creative Self-development” of students. The method leading to the research of this issue was a pedagogical experiment on testing pedagogical conditions of effective development of the “Self-concept of Creative Self-development” of students during the study of “Pedagogics” as an educational discipline. The main result of this article is the conclusion that application of the system of creative, research related tasks targeted to the development of the “Self-concept of Creative Self-development” of students, leads to significant growth of all the backbone elements of “selfness”. The experiment confirmed the effectiveness of designing the “Self-concept of Creative Self-development” of students through the training process (on the basis of the pedagogical disciplines’ training material) based on the integration of the pedagogical conditions: system of diagnostics and self-diagnostics of “self” processes, enrichment of training sessions on pedagogical disciplines with the specialized tasks on stimulating reflexive thinking, aimed at self-actualization of one’s own creative development processes, assistance to students in realizing indicators and criteria of principle backbone elements of creative development, periodical self-correction of the “Self-concept of Creative Self-development”; implementation of the education and training integration links. Information in this article may be useful for educators of higher education institutions, involved in generating the “Self-concept of Creative Self-development” of students in the framework of professional education.

Keywords: “Self-concept”, “Self-concept of Creative Self-development”, designing the “Self-concept of Creative Self-development”, backbone elements of selfness

1. Introduction

1.1 Actuality of the Issue

A personality is formed through development of a certain model in its inner life, which has been titled as the “Self-concept” of creative self-development by contemporary science. The higher educational institutions are oriented towards upbringing of a new socio-cultural type of personality today. A personality that is creative, intellectually developed, striving for transformational activity and possessing the sense of new.

1.2 Explore Importance of the Problem

In psychology there are numerous approaches towards assessment of personality and human “self”. Spirkin (2006), for instance, views the “self” as the carrier and at the same time as the element of self-comprehension. Dubrovskiy (2009) approaches the “self” as the central integrating and activating factor of subjective reality. Ananyev (2007), Leontyev (2005) and Merlin (1986) review the “self” as the inner core of a personality, as its conscious inception, the source of individual self-comprehension, a system of a person’s perceptions about oneself. In his works Burns (1982) stated that the “Self-concept” is not only affirmation, description of features of one’s own personality, but the whole complex of their judgmental characteristics and related feelings. At the same time, contemporary humanistic pedagogics interprets education not as a focused personality formation in

accordance with the chosen ideal, but as a creation of all favorable conditions for self-development of personality including through creative activity.

Andreev (2008), Kalimullin and Gabdilkhakov (2014), Zakirova and Koletvinova (2014), Biktagirova and Valeeva (2014), Ivanenko et al. (2015) describes creative self-development of personality as a special type of creative activity with subject-subjective orientation directed towards intensification and improvement of effectiveness of “selfness” processes, amongst which are such backbone processes as self-comprehension, creative self-determination, self-management, creative self-fulfillment and self-improvement of personality. Notably, studentship in particular, is a kind of sensitive period for establishment of selfness processes, since adolescence implies beginning of independent living, when profession is chosen and social position changes dramatically. Self-assessment becomes more abstract during adolescent years. The primary task for young men and women is to self-actualize, to build one’s own identity from separate pieces of knowledge about oneself. Precisely during this time their intellect reaches such a level of development, that allows them to reflect on what the outside world is like and what it should be. Establishment of stable self-comprehension and stable image of “Self” is the central psychological development of adolescence. Hermans (2003) believes that: “Many contemporary conceptions of the self are, often unwittingly, based on Cartesian notions of the mind as individualized, ahistorical, noncultural, disembodied, and centralized. In opposition to these assumptions, the dialogical self is conceived of as socialized, historical, cultural, embodied, and decentralized”.

1.3 Status of a Problem

Domination of creative activity as the determining factor in the motivational structure of student’s personality and motivation for development of creative qualities are ensured if aspirations of an educator and a student are directed towards the development of inner motives of cognitive activity, which activates mental abilities and, by interacting with them, stimulates ‘out of the box’ thinking. Thus, Giddens (2006) argues that the self is not a passive entity, determined by external influences. Rather, in forging their self-identities, no matter how local their contexts of action, individuals contribute to and directly promote social influences that are global in their consequences and implications. Consequently, when motivation for development of creative qualities prevails, the self is usually active and shows the initiative. If obstacles occur, then it finds the ways of overcoming them.

Creative character of educational cognitive activity, modeling of creative self-development situations are ensured by the determination of educational process participants towards creativity. Subsequently, mandatory reproductive activities are an integral part of one’s own creative process. Creative process in training is understood not only as mastering the mechanisms of an activity, but also as the process of development of personal qualities required for creative work.

Even though creativeness relates to a non-adaptive activity, with the unconscious origin at its basis, the training environment is an extremely important condition for development of creative nature of personality. Availability of the environment, which lacks rigid regulation, provides for freedom of choice and necessity of independent activities, facilitates awakening and development of creative potential.

An important force stimulating self-development of students is the way how their educational activity is organized. Kon (1984) believes that a human “self” exists only due to the constant dialog with others. Prevalence of active training methods, which strengthen cognitive activities of a personality, creates reciprocal cooperation in trainee-trainer relationships, developing the field of mutual creative strain, emotional experience. Students begin to evaluate the training process not only from the usefulness of its results point of view, but also make sense of it ethically. This to a large extent should serve as the foundation for creative self-development of personality. During the study it is necessary to use such forms and methods of training, which activate self-processes and uncover creative abilities, including problem solving, research work, business games and others.

Changes, taking place in our society, cover all parts of our life, posing high demands to each individual, his/her knowledge, personal qualities, and, first and foremost, professional training. Higher educational institutions, as never before, have an urgent objective to not only continuously fulfill and enhance students’ knowledge, so that they acquire latest scientific and technical achievements, but to also train a university graduate as a competitive specialist, possessing a certain set of personal qualities. In particular, more and more direction is given towards education of students as self-developing, competitive individuals, able to lead and succeed in their professional activity. Special attention in achievement of this objective is paid to ensuring that these individuals learn to not only make independent decisions, but to also take responsibility for them.

In order to train a specialist who would satisfy the modern markets’ needs, it is necessary to take the direction towards development of personal qualities that will form part of professional competences, taking into account

that these specific qualities will create the potential for sustainability of a personality in the conditions of contiguous technological changes, resulting in changes of competencies themselves. Such qualities are ensured by pedagogical means, which makes the theory of pedagogics actual in the context of real market demands. Development of an adequate “Self-concept”, and, first and foremost, self-comprehension, self-determination, self-assertiveness, ability for creative self-development is one of important conditions for development of personal qualities of an individual.

“Self concept” represents a complex of an individual’s perceptions about oneself and includes believes, values and behavioral trends. Due to the above it can be viewed as a set of attitudes towards oneself, unique for each person. “Self-concept” forms an important component of an individual’s self-comprehension, it takes part in the self-regulation and self-organization processes of a person, since it determines interpretation of experience and serves as the source of a person’s expectations.

Integration processes, occurring in the theory of modern pedagogics, represent development and self-development of personality as a single, integral process, since training and the processes of personality self-development are interrelated dialectically (Ivanenko et al., 2015; Salikhova, 2015; Khusainova, 2015).

In order to develop personal qualities among students, it is necessary to use such didactic technologies, which would provide conditions for development of leadership potential through viewing leadership as responsibility, readiness to create individual projects, take decisions and make choices as well as self-improve creatively.

Therefore, the process of designing the “Self-concept of creative self-development” of students gains the importance, as it entails search for new ideas, technologies, forms and methods of training process organization in the educational institution with the purpose of professional-creative self-development of a personality on the basis of its inner motives, system of values and professional objectives.

Designing represents creation and implementation of special models and programs, ensuing real opportunity for self-diagnostics, construction and implementation of individual trajectories of “Self-concept of creative self-development”, stimulating students’ activity in mastering methods and means of this process implementation, necessary to uncover individuality, spirituality, creativity, which would facilitate professional development and development of personal qualities. Essential mechanisms of the process of designing the “Self-concept of creative self-development” of students includes work on development of basic elements of “selfness”: “self-actualization”, “self-determination”, “self-management”, “self-education”, “self-improvement”, “self-fulfillment” in the context of varied student learning-creative and scientific activities.

1.4 Research Hypothesis

Analysis of the scientific-research work and the leading practice of pedagogical activity in the field of pedagogical stimulation of designing the “Self-concept of creative self-development” of students demonstrated, that this process is carried out by educators in the form of organizing the external conditions, within which internal conditions of students’ self-development become more active. Designing of the “Self-concept of creative self-development” is a binary process, carried out by trainer and student. At the same time, this aspect of the issue is still an insufficiently researched area of the scientific knowledge and practical activity, allowing to formulate the research hypothesis: the process of formation of the “Self-concept of creative self-development” is transformed into project activity, carried out by the students themselves in relation to self-construction of their personality, in the event if there is transition from the project activity of the trainer into the designing of the “Self-concept of creative self-development” by the students themselves based on the created by the trainer pedagogical conditions for designing.

Pedagogical conditions for designing of the “Self-concept of creative self-development” of students should be reviewed from the angle of interpersonal interactions and personality-oriented training strategies. In the framework of the selected research topic, we have checked out the effectiveness of designing the “Self-concept of creative self-development” of students during their training in Pedagogical Science discipline.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Research Objectives

The “Self-concept”, which is seen as the integral of different images of the “Self”, is the core of self-comprehension, and, at the same time, is the most important regulator of a person’s external activity. In a certain sense, organization of behavior, style of communication and activities, including training activity, are determined by the character of a person’s comprehension of oneself. The following objectives have been addressed during this research:

- 1) Compiling a list of components of “selfness”.
- 2) Selection of diagnostic methodologies for assessment of pedagogical experiment effectiveness.
- 3) Introduction to students and their comprehension of such terms as “self-development”, “creative self-development”, “Self-concept of creative self-development” as sophisticated, complex structures, discovering their interrelations, structural elements of the “Self-concept of creative self-development” of students, activation of their reflexive activity.
- 4) Activation of the subjective position of students in the process of designing the “Self-concept of creative self-development”.
- 5) Conducting an experiment on designing the “Self-concept of creative self-development” of students during the training in Pedagogics as a discipline.
- 6) Processing the experiment data using mathematic statistical methods.

2.2 Theoretical and Empirical Methods

A complex of various complementary research methods have been used to test the hypothesis:

- Theoretical—analysis of psychological-pedagogical literature on the researched issue; examination and consolidation of innovative pedagogical experience in the field of higher education, analysis, synthesis;
- Empirical—involved observation, acknowledging and forming pedagogical experiment, interview, discussions, examination of the results of educational and out of study activities of the students;
- Processing of the experiment data has been carried out using the mathematic statistical methods: statistical testing of hypothesis, dispersion and correlation analysis, χ^2 criteria. All mathematical calculations were carried out in EXCEL application of the MICROSOFT OFFICE package.

2.3 Research Base

The base of the research was “Kazan (Privolzhskiy) Federal University”, a Federal State educational institution of higher professional education.

2.4 Research Stages

The research was carried out in three stages:

During the first stage, an experimental platform has been created, based in “Kazan (Privolzhskiy) Federal University”; training-methodological complex of Pedagogics as an educational discipline has been developed and implemented into the training process, which included didactical materials. Thus, a system of pedagogical conditions for independent design of the “Self-concept of creative self-development” of students has been created.

During the second stage, the experiment itself on designing the “Self-concept of creative self-development” of students has been carried out in the framework of teaching Pedagogics as an educational discipline.

During the third stage the results of the pedagogical experiment on testing the effectiveness of pedagogical conditions of designing the “Self-concept of creative self-development” of students in the framework of teaching Pedagogics as an educational discipline have been summarized.

2.5 Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation of effectiveness of professional-motivating training of students has been carried out by way of measuring the level of development (self-development) of backbone elements of “selfness”:

- Aptitude for self-education,
- Aptitude for self-actualization,
- Aptitude for self-determination,
- Aptitude for self-management,
- Aptitude for self-improvement,
- Aptitude for self-fulfillment,
- Aptitude for self-development.

2.6 Course and Description of the Experiment

Based on the above facts, we felt it was most appropriate to use the test on “Self-assessment of aptitudes for self-education and self-development”, designed by Andreev (2008) in order to test the effectiveness of forming the “Self-concept of creative self-development” of students during training in pedagogical disciplines. This test allows detecting the level of development (self-development) of the backbone elements of “selfness”: aptitude for self-education, self-actualization, self-determination, self-management, self-improvement, self-fulfillment, and self-development.

Based on the obtained results it was suggested to analyze what is hampering the process of forming and developing students’ aptitudes for self-education and self-development and determine the pedagogical conditions for self-improvement of these qualities.

Participants of the experiment were third year students of the History Faculty, studying the Pedagogics. All the students (56 persons) attended the general course of lectures on “General Pedagogics”. For the discussion sessions on the course of Pedagogics the students have been split into two groups (Experimental (E)—25 persons, and Control (C)—31 persons. Calculation of the necessary sampling volume whilst observing dispersion in both groups for the value of $\gamma=0.98$ under t-criteria of Student showed its sufficiency, which allows to consider the results as representative. Further, all the results and conclusions have also been deduced to the significance value of level of $\gamma=0.98$ and $\alpha=0.02$ accordingly. Dispersion is close to normal (with the probability 0.98), which allows to make conclusions on the representation of the average as the measure of central tendency.

3. Results

3.1 Backbone Elements of “Selfness” in the Structure of the “Self-Concept of Creative Self-Development”

The process of creative self-development of personality includes a large number of “selfnesses”: self-analysis, self-observation, self-comprehension, self-regulation, self-activity, self-actualization, self-management, self-determination, self-improvement. The list of selfness processes could have been expanded, however basic analysis shows, that, for instance, self-actualization includes self-comprehension, self-observation, self-analysis as integral elements. Analysis, carried out by Andreev (2005), and consolidation of the selfness processes into more significant structural units show that the following selfness elements may be identified as the most significant and backbone: self-education, self-comprehension, creative self-determination, self-management, self-improvement, self-fulfillment. As it has already been stated, the “Self-concept of creative self-development” of students is understood as the complex of perceptions about oneself in the context of real and ideal, present and future, with the possibility of the “selfness” processes intensification, among which the backbone processes are self-comprehension, creative self-determination, self-management, creative self-fulfillment, and self-improvement intertwined with their self-assessment. Consequently, the “Self-concept of creative self-development” may be understood not only as the “theory of self” or the effect of realization of the own “Self”, but also as the regulation mechanism of all types of creative activity, performed by a human being.

3.2 Pedagogical Conditions of Designing the “Self-Concept of Creative Self-Development” of Students

Golovanova (2008) highlights the influence of group training technologies, including technologies of design, on the development of students’ personal qualities. Kalimullin (2012) believes that designing facilitates successful professional orientation. Based on the opinion of Sibgatullina (2012), the process of project-creative activity plays a significant role in shaping of students’ professional competence. This is why the design technology has been chosen as fundamental in formation of the “Self-concept of creative self-development”. To organize the process of designing the “Self-concept of creative self-development” of students in the framework of studying Pedagogics as an educational discipline, teaching materials have been prepared, including a program of discussion sessions for the course of Pedagogics, which were carried out on the basis of previously obtained theoretical knowledge: in the control group the sessions were held based on the traditional forms with only fragmental use of research and creative type tasks; in the experimental group the sessions were held by way of creating pedagogical conditions for designing of the “Self-concept of creative self development” of students during training:

- Ensuing domination of active cognitive interest in the motivational structure of students’ personality and motivation for development of creative qualities;
- Pedagogical diagnostics of the “Self-concept of creative self-development” of students;
- Arranging the mastering of tools of changing the “Self-concept” with orientation towards creative self-development;

- Pedagogical stimulation of the “Self-concept of creative self-development” of students during training in pedagogical disciplines;
- Creative character of training-cognitive activity and modeling of creative self-development situations;
- Organization of independent project-research and project-creative activities of students;
- Personally oriented pedagogical communication, directed towards changing of the “Self-concept” with the aim of self-correction of creative self-development;
- Implementation of integration links between education and training.

During practical sessions the following has been applied: systems of diagnostic, creative, research type tasks aimed at designing and forming of the “Self-concept” of students’ creative self-development (working with the “Self-concept” table in the past, present and future; essay writing and its further content analysis; working based on the Benjamin Franklin’s time management system; creative tasks and sessions based on research models; mutual evaluation of performed tasks; group forms of training; testing the students’ knowledge; analysis of one’s own views and beliefs, reflection).

3.3 Course and Results of the Experiment

Prior to the start of the experiment all students were asked to complete a self-assessment of the selfness components using the test. Average values are shown on Figure 1, comparing control and experimental groups.

We can see that the average value of the level of “selfness” development in the experimental and in the control groups is very similar (self-education—E-7.41 and C-7.90; self-comprehension—E-6.51 and C-6.91; self-determination—E-6.31 and C-6.44; self-management—E-6.24 and C-6.42; self-improvement—E-7.13 and C-6.75; self-fulfillment—E-5.95 and C-6.38; self-development—E-6.43 and C-6.58). The linear correlation coefficient (0.84) also points out to the existing connection. The same is confirmed by minor difference of dispersion values in both groups in the beginning of the experiment. Notably, the level of formation of the majority of the “selfness” components in the beginning of the experiment in the experimental group was insignificantly, but still lower, than in the control group.

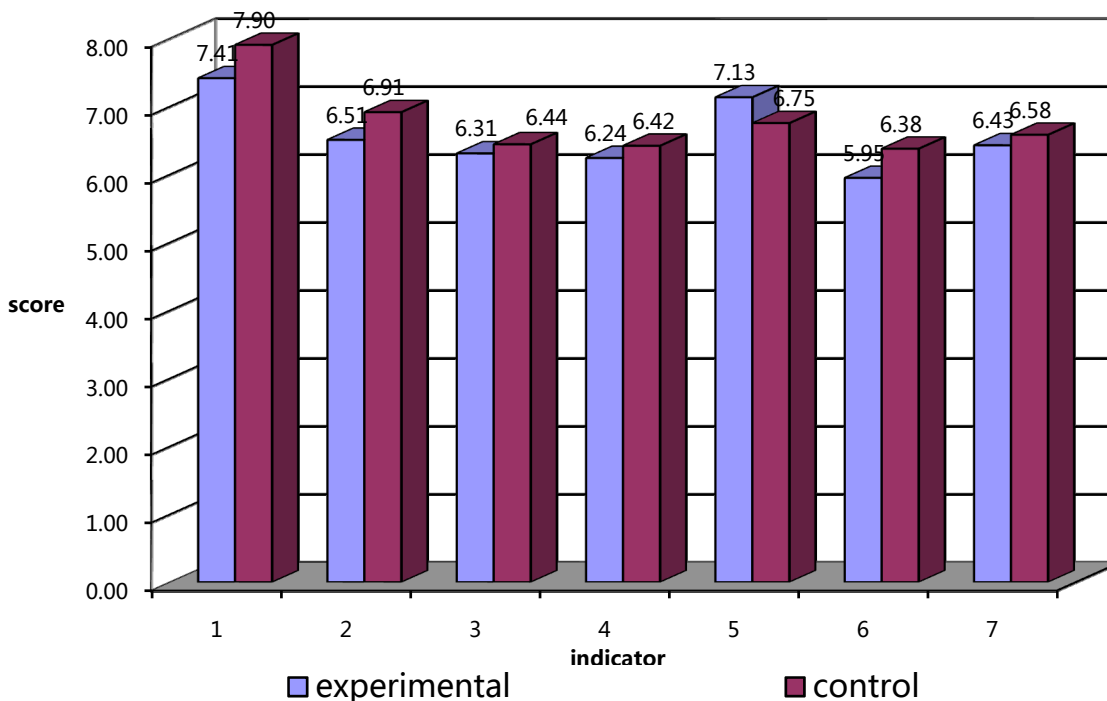


Figure 1. Levels of development of the backbone elements of “selfness” in the beginning of the experiment*

* 1—self-education, 2—self-comprehension, 3—self-determination, 4—self-management, 5—self-improvement, 6— self-fulfillment, 7—self-development

At the end of the discussion sessions' cycle of the training course on Pedagogics, the students of both groups were once again asked to assess the level of "selfness". Average results of the "selfness" development levels at the end of the experiment are shown in comparison between the experimental and the control groups on Figure 2. The link between the results of both groups is average (correlation coefficient = 0.468), which points out to a significant mathematical difference of the results at the end of the experiment.

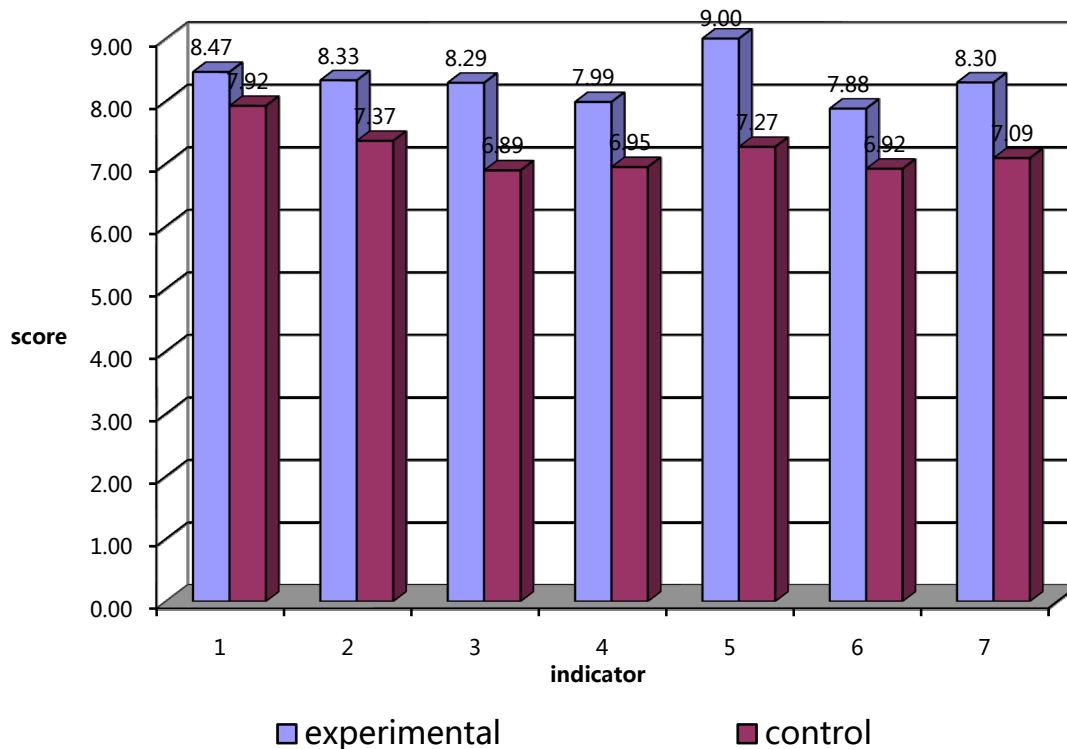


Figure 2. Levels of development of the backbone elements of "selfness" at the end of the experiment*

* 1—self-education, 2—self-comprehension, 3—self-determination, 4—self-management, 5—self-improvement, 6—self-fulfillment, 7—self-development

Correlation analysis of the links between the beginning and the end indicators of development of the backbone elements of "selfness" showed that in the experimental group the link between the beginning and the end result on average is weaker, than in the control group (C- 0.986984; E-0.795901). Consequently, there is an uneven increase of development levels among students of the experimental group compared with the results in the beginning of the experiment, whereas in the control group the general trend of development remains unchanged. This is also evident from the large value of data dispersion in the experimental group compared to the control group at the end of the experiment, as well as from the correlation coefficients for all students (C-0.90562; E-0.35261).

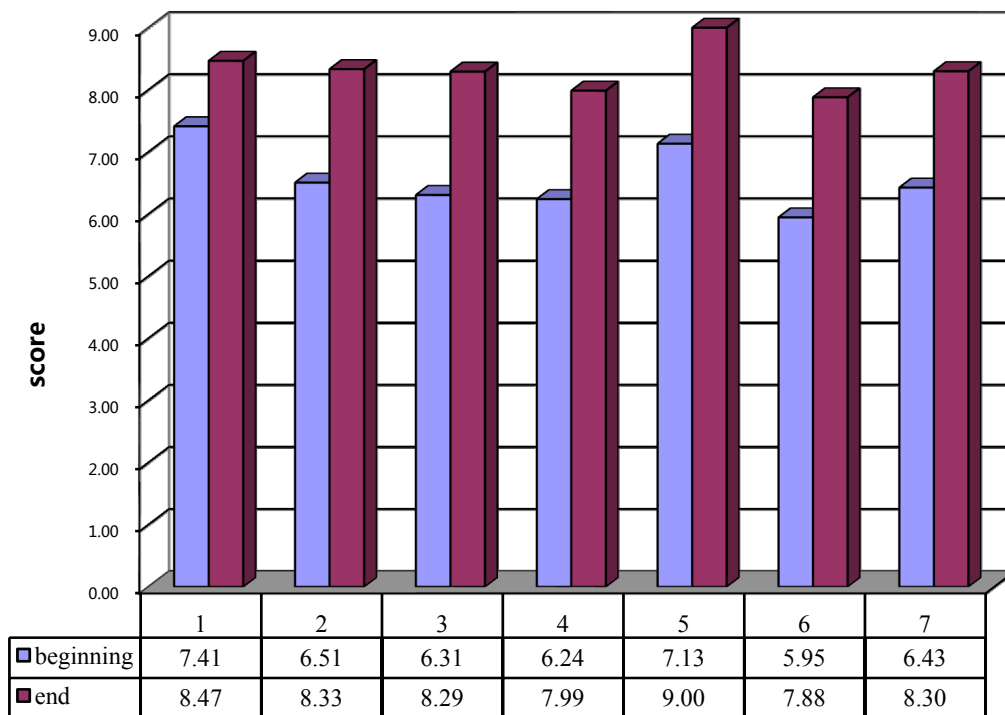


Figure 3. Development of the backbone elements of “selfness” in the experimental group*

* 1—self-education, 2—self-comprehension, 3—self-determination, 4—self-management, 5—self-improvement, 6—self-fulfillment, 7—self-development

We would note a significant increase of all indicators of the backbone elements of “selfness” in the experimental group (Figure 3), which is also supported by the “Law of holistic creative self-development of personality”, developed by V. I. Andreev. “Progressive changes in one of the components of selfness (self-comprehension, creative self-determination, self-management, creative self-fulfillment, self-improvement) inevitably accelerate the process of creative self-development of personality as a whole [12].

The dynamics of increase in the control group is also positive, but not as significant (Figure 4).

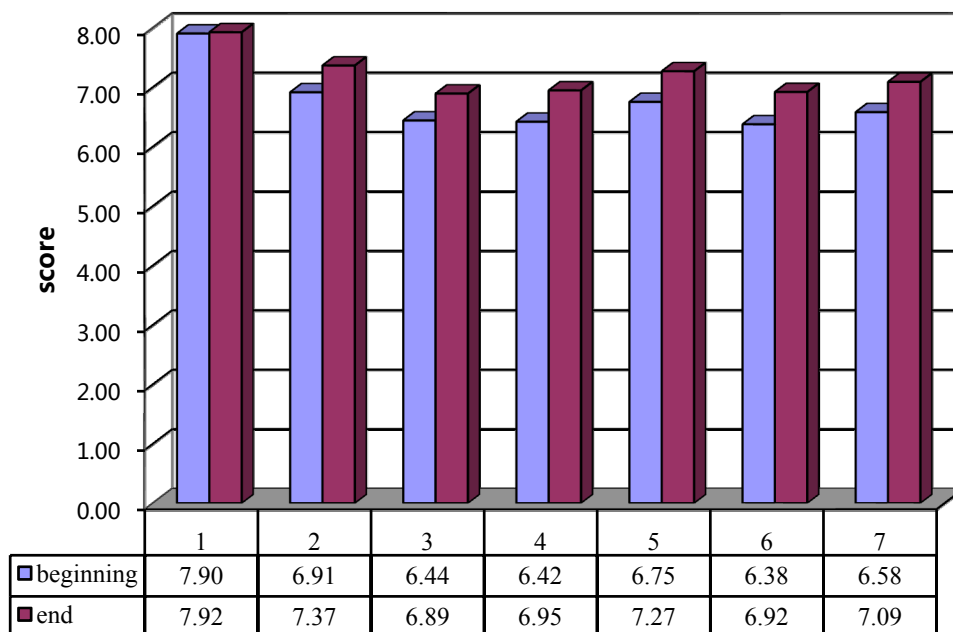


Figure 4. Development of the backbone elements of “selfness” in the control group*

* 1—self-education, 2—self-comprehension, 3—self-determination, 4—self-management, 5—self-improvement, 6— self-fulfillment, 7—self-development

4. Discussions

The element-by-element analysis of the dynamics of changes in the development of the backbone components of “selfness” (Figure 5) showed, that in the control group the level of development of the “self-education” element remained practically unchanged (0,3% to the initial level), where as in the experimental group it increased by 14.2%.

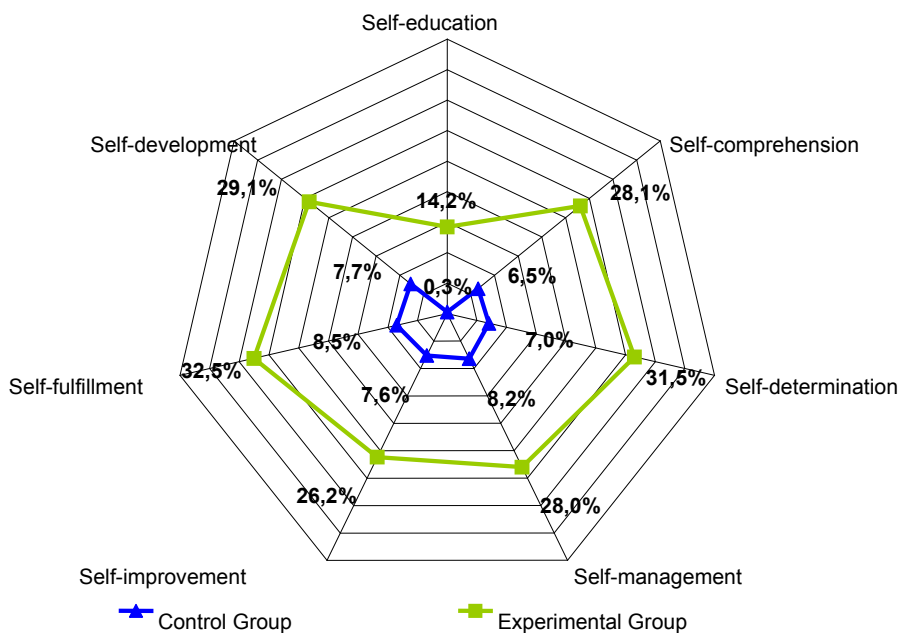


Figure 5. Positive development dynamics of the backbone elements’ components of “selfness” as the result of the experiment

A significant difference in increase of the indicator is noted in the “self-fulfillment” element, both in the control group (8.5%) as well as in the experimental group (32.5%). Similar trend is observed for the elements of “self-comprehension” (C-6.5%; E-28.1%), “self-determination” (C-7%; E-31.5%) and “self-development” (C-7.7%; E-29.1%).

The carried out analysis show significant increase of the development level of the “selfness” elements in the experimental group (on average 27.1% from the beginning level) compared with the results in the control group (6.6%).

5. Conclusions

Consequently, application of the system of diagnostic, creative, research tasks, aimed at designing of the “Self-concept of creative self-development” of students, leads to a significant increase in all the backbone elements of “selfness”. This experiment confirms the effectiveness of designing the “Self-concept of creative self-development” of students in the course of study (using the Pedagogical disciplines’ training materials), based on the integration of the pedagogical conditions: a system of diagnostics and self-diagnostics of the “selfness” processes, saturation of sessions on pedagogical disciplines with special tasks stimulating reflexive thinking, aimed at self-comprehension of processes on one’s own creative development, assistance to students in understanding of indicators and criteria of the principle backbone elements of creative self-development, periodic self-correction of the “Self-concept of creative self-development”; implementation of the integration links of education and training.

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