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## Existential Analysis in Theory and Practice of Education

**Purpose.** The aim of this article is to reinterpret the key ideas of existential analysis for contemporary educational theory and practice. **Theoretical basis.** The research used the following theoretical methods: analysis, synthesis, comparison, and generalization of the fundamental principles of existential analysis as one of the branches of modern psychoanalysis. **Originality.** The scientific novelty of the research lies in characterizing L. Binswanger's existential analysis (Daseinsanalysis) and V. Frankl's logotherapy for their subsequent implementation in pedagogical theory and practice. It emphasizes that the principles of existential analysis in education aim to assist children in finding goals and learning motivation in a rapidly changing world. It is proven that existential analysis focuses on the idea of returning to the traditional view of the educator as a guide for children on their path to self-realization and self-discovery. **Conclusions.** The study concludes that "existential communication" between teachers and students helps the latter to go through new life experiences, make sense of them, and plan their future prospects. The ideas of existential analysis encourage the consideration of the ethical component in pedagogical practice, aimed at anticipating possible life risks, choosing ways to achieve plans, accepting the limitations of desires, and explaining the reasonable enjoyment of life without excessive indulgence. To achieve this goal, recommendations are provided on how to work with children's motivation, the need to teach students to determine their place in the system of social relations and choose a profession to serve the truth and people.

*Keywords:* existentialism; existential analysis; existential psychoanalysis; pedagogy; psychoanalytic pedagogy; philosophy of education

### Introduction

The crisis of modern philosophy of education, marked by the contradiction between the strengthening of alternative learning ideas, the widespread use of ICT, the decline in knowledge, spiritual devastation and the growth of destructive attitudes of all participants in the educational process, encourages us to learn the world's most famous psychoanalytic theories of personality development. It is well known that within psychoanalysis, a peculiar concept of pedagogical support, re-education and psychocorrection has been formed, which is called psychoanalytic pedagogy in scientific circles (Nelin, 2023).

The formation of psychoanalytic pedagogy in the early twentieth century coincided with the flourishing of existentialist philosophy. It is known that the development of existentialism in Europe was caused by deep socio-political crises and military confrontations. The cornerstone of existentialism was the thesis that the existing system of relationships is a drama of lonely and devastated people who, in their communication with others, seek to subdue them to their will or to submit to society. Existentialists believed that scientific and technological progress, bureaucratisation of life, monotony of work, complication of social structures, standardisation and globalisation of the world in all its manifestations would inevitably lead to the dehumanisation of society. Emphasising the constant contradiction between a person's helplessness and loneliness, as well as the tendency to change the world, existentialists predicted the defeat of man and the crisis of his or her individual existence.

The problem of being has become especially acute in pedagogy, which in recent years has moved quickly from a humanistic paradigm to an informational one. Undoubtedly, this was also contributed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced participants in the educational process to

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change classrooms to secluded rooms, exacerbating the long-standing antagonism between man and machine, between the spiritual and material worlds. Given such problems in education as asynchronous learning, its isolation from life, a decline in the level of training of specialists and the loss of semantic reference points, it is important to study various trends in existential analysis for pedagogy.

In an attempt to combine the ideas of existential analysis and pedagogy, contemporary specialists are researching and trying to rethink the creative works of such philosophers and psychologists as L. Binswanger, M. Boss, R. May, V. Frankl, and others. In particular, the pedagogical ideas of Viktor Frankl were carefully studied by Polish scholars J. Michalski and J. Binnebesel. J. Michalski called for a rethinking of the modern philosophy of education and the revival of the question of the meaning of life in the theory and practice of education. The researcher stressed that pedagogy should take the path that leads not to "nonexistence" but to the fullness of life and self-realisation of the individual (Michalski, 2021, p. 9). Instead, J. Binnebesel focused on the key provisions of Viktor Frankl's logotherapy, which the scientist revealed through the concept of tanatopedagogy. J. Binnebesel (2014) saw the key problem of tanatopedagogy in the awareness of the meaning of life by a person, taking into account the acceptance of the fact of the inevitability of his or her death in the future. An analysis of the content of J. Binnebesel's concept of tanatopedagogy leads to the conclusion that the development of a person's physical and mental nature must necessarily contribute to the development of his or her spiritual dimension. Only when a person realises his or her spiritual nature can he or she live his or her own life, resist various diseases and sufferings, and gain new experience. In general, the prospect of a person's death determines the uniqueness of his or her life and gives it a special meaning (Binnebesel, 2014, p. 236). Thus, the ideas of V. Frankl in general and the tanatopedagogy of J. Binnebesel in particular can be defined as a way of finding the meaning of life in a constantly changing world.

Let us also pay our attention to the study by H. Siller and E. Waibel (2018) on the use of existential pedagogy ideas for teaching. The researchers proved that the key ideas of existential analysis contribute to building relationships between teachers and students, strengthening children's self-esteem, and implementing an individual approach in education in general. However, the researchers focused exclusively on the ideas of V. Frankl's logotherapy, while the ideas of L. Binswanger as the founder of existential analysis were not studied. The relevance of our study is added by E. Rogova's (2015) opinion that educational discourses of sense-making are based on the existential direction, in particular, on the ideas of L. Binswanger, M. Boss, R. May, E. Fromm and others (p. 56).

### **Purpose**

Based on the principles of pedagogy of sense-making, the article aims to reveal the ideas of existential analysis and determine its potential for modern theory and practice of education.

### **Statement of basic materials**

Traditionally, existentialist theorists saw the purpose of education as the liberation of a unique and inimitable personality from dependence on a hostile, material and, in general, alien world. A well-known Ukrainian educator H. Vasiannyk (2013) noted that in an attempt to resist the material world, a person is forced to constantly liken his or her being to the "being of things", which ultimately leads to the loss of one's own individuality and the transformation of a

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person into a "thing among things" (p. 15). Accordingly, to prevent this, a person must find and realise his or her potential, learn to think and act differently from others. To this end, the only way to educate a free and independent personality is to form a teacher who is equally independent of the outside world and social trends.

Also the existentialism supporters focused their attention on the problem of choice and human responsibility for it. Accordingly, a person who respects his or her choice will aim to serve the truth and people, rather than strive for primitive careerism, immoral self-assertion, opportunism and achievement of goals at any cost. For example, a teacher who has consciously chosen this profession and is proud of it will remain honest not only with himself or herself and others, but will also tirelessly, without sparing his or her own strength and talent, grow spiritually and thus serve people. When working with children and other colleagues, a teacher should not only have a "self perspective" – his/her own view of himself/herself and others' view of themselves – but also have a "perspective on others" – my view of others and their view of me (Merleau-Ponty, 1993, p. 121). Thus, we emphasise that from the very beginning existentialism focused on individualisation of learning and development of the emotional sphere of participants in the educational process, aimed to reduce the usually formalised communication, which is characterised by cunning, insincerity and falsity, to open and creative interaction in the teacher-teacher and teacher-student system. In general, the development of the existential trend in education has re-emphasised the humanistic traditions of self-sacrifice and service to people.

The emergence of the existential trend in psychoanalysis in the 1930s was due to the insufficient theoretical grounding of the latter, in particular in the aspects of psychopathology and clinical psychiatry. In contrast to classical Freudianism, which originated in the depths of psychotherapy, the existentialist movement was born as a result of scientific and theoretical discussions about the shortcomings of psychoanalysis that needed to be levelled. The existentialists' ontological ideas about developing a theory without relying on other theories seemed paradoxical. In this regard, U. Sonnemann (1959) noted: "Judging from the current status of existential analysis in psychotherapy, it is advisable to speak of it not as a clearly formed method, but as a critical regulator of existing methods" (transl. by I. N.) (p. 611). That is, existential analysis developed as an antithesis to other areas of psychotherapy. At the same time, it should be emphasised that existential analysis is one of the areas of modern psychoanalysis that focuses on the study and correction of the individuals in their entirety, integrity and uniqueness.

The concept of "existential analysis" should not be confused with the concept of "existential psychoanalysis". As noted, the former is one of the branches of psychoanalysis, while "existential psychoanalysis" is a philosophical trend that involves rethinking the ideas of S. Freud, K. Jaspers, and M. Heidegger. Existential psychoanalysis, which was the creation of J.-P. Sartre (1981), aimed to explain human existence and reality not through the experience of the past, but through the challenges of the future. Accordingly, the meaning of human life cannot be understood if it is reduced to mechanical or biological determinism, because in this way we deprive a person of his or her freedom and individual responsibility. Thus, the task of pedagogy in existential psychoanalysis was to provide choices and outline prospects for further life. At the same time, existential psychoanalysis did not provide a clear answer to how to achieve this goal. And, in general, existential psychoanalysis has never been holistic, because its adherents were united primarily by philosophy, not by specific techniques or methods for achieving the goal.

The founder of existential analysis is considered to be the Swiss psychiatrist L. Binswanger, who made a kind of anthropological revolution in psychiatry, giving it a phenomenological

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meaning. The methodological basis of L. Binswanger's existential analysis was a synthesis of anthropological, phenomenological, psychological and, in fact, existential discourses. Based on the philosophical ideas of M. Heidegger and E. Husserl, L. Binswanger modified the theory and practice of psychoanalysis, taking as a basis the study of the personality and the study of interpersonal relationships in conditions of conflict and the need for choice. According to Binswanger's ideas, the emergence of neuroses is primarily caused by a decrease or avoidance of openness to one's future. Accordingly, the key idea of Dasein analysis is that a psychotherapeutic effect will be observed when a person receives support in recognising himself or herself as a free and self-determining person.

Another well-known area of existential analysis was the logotherapy of Viktor Frankl. While the development of L. Binswanger's design analysis took place in Switzerland, the formation of logotherapy took place in Austria. It is no coincidence that the existential analysis of Viktor Frankl was also called the "Third Viennese School", which gained a large number of followers in the Austrian capital after S. Freud and A. Adler. In fact, the philosophical ideas of A. Adler about the sense of cohesion in society had a great influence on the logotherapy of Viktor Frankl, as well as the ideas of R. May. In particular, what A. Adler called the "style of life" was transformed into the "style of being" in Frankl's case. Subsequently, due to a rather large number of similar thoughts, Frankl was accused of plagiarising Adler's ideas, to which Frankl responded: "Stop accusing me that logotherapy is just Adler's psychology [...]. Who has the right to decide this if not Adler himself? After all, it was he who insisted that I be expelled from the Association of Individual Psychology" (transl. by I. N.) (Pongratz, 1973, p. 173).

An important contribution of existential analysts to the development of philosophy of education was a shift from the usual analysis of the "I", which was perceived as a closed mental mechanism, to the analysis of the "We", as a human way of being in the world. Thus, the traditional understanding of the "I" changed the vector from the study of inner experiences to the preconditions of their emergence in the external world, i.e. to the analysis of being in the world (Blankenburg, 1962). From this angle, the student's abilities and the environment in which he or she grows up are not studied in isolation or opposition, but instead in relation to various factors, including the collective unconscious, the student's intrapsychic conflicts, and other psychosocial factors. In general, in existential analysis, any phobias, neuroses, or social deviations have preconditions in the person's relationship with the world. This is especially true for the younger generation, which is only forming an idea of itself and the world, and is unable to distinguish between the concepts of social norms and deviations. This problem is of particular importance for Ukraine in the context of war, as the generation of preschoolers still does not know life without war and social upheaval, and their entry into public life is complicated by the virtual absence of the educational process and the inability of parents to define the purpose of education, postponing it until the post-war years. Such a situation makes the process of individualization of a child impossible, when positive ideals and values of the outside world are formed in his or her mind and become his or her own beliefs (Blankenburg, 1962).

Thus, in existential analysis, a person appears as a unity of objective and subjective, as a globality that has two coordinates: possibilities (as intentional being) and history (future and past). That is, a person is always inscribed in the temporality of his or her history (Iurato, 2021a, p. 2). The main task of a teacher in such conditions is to accept the children's perspective, to help them find a unique meaning of their presence for themselves and the world at large. That is, the teacher should help each child to combine previously acquired experience with reality in the fu-

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ture. In other words, the existential modalities that arise in a child through overcoming the split between the subject (the self) and the object (the external environment) contribute to the unity between his or her presence (being of the self) and the world. And in conditions when a child feels that the relationship with himself/herself, others or the world in general is extremely intense, he or she may have a desire to become different. In existential analysis, such life crises are not seen as negative, but rather as intermediate stages in the formation of personal maturity.

Unlike standardised procedures or disciplinary practices, existential analysis does not have a set algorithm of actions, because each child's story is special and unique, and therefore each time it requires access to his or her past experience, so that the child could fill his or her being (Dasein), rethink his or her abilities and options for their possible realisation. This is possible thanks to the teacher's empathy and immersion in the children's world, where they can see the drama of their life with their own eyes, understand the motives of their behaviour and discuss it with the child in a language they understand (Iurato, 2021a, p. 6). At the same time, existential analysis contradicts the usual practice of explaining behaviour on the basis of the past, does not devalue the present through the analysis of unique experiences, but instead contributes to a new experience of life's failures and the formation of self-awareness. To do this, a person who really wants to become free, who wants to define the goals of his or her existence and project them onto the outside world, must become aware of himself or herself and his or her real capabilities.

The emphasis on rethinking the behaviour of the past in order to further realise one's abilities in the future significantly distinguishes existential analysis from M. Heidegger's existentialism. The analysis of Heidegger's ideas allows us to interpret existential pedagogy as a promising technology for freeing education from the established nihilism and meaninglessness. Unfortunately, traditional pedagogy clearly represents the roles of the teacher and the student, who are characterised by predefined standards of behaviour. As a result, both parties find themselves in the grip of a system that levels their inner nature and makes it impossible to express creativity. To address this, some researchers (Heydari & Askarizadeh, 2023) advise changing the traditional Logos in education to Dasein, which will lead to the reproduction of new meanings in pedagogy.

It is also important that the creative teacher-student dyad be supported by the children's parents. The key task of parents at a certain stage of a child's development should be to separate them. That is, at some point, parents must realise that their child can exist without them. Understanding this fact will allow parents to pass on to other people, especially teachers, the opportunity to take care of their child. As a result, the child must understand that he or she exists not only for parents, but also for other people, that he or she is a participant in group interaction, one of the co-creators of meaning, which will teach him or her to share victories and defeats (Zannini & Daniele, 2021, p. 79).

The ideas of the existentialists directly influenced the theory of education, which they sought to bring to the level of a comprehensive and inclusive theory. Accordingly, the existing concepts of education were criticised by existentialists for their isolated and fragmented impact on human behaviour. Unlike Freudians, who defended the ideas of determinism, existentialists developed their views in accordance with the provisions on freedom and the possibility of free choice. While Freudians explained the child's behaviour by unconscious drives, existentialists relied exclusively on the sphere of consciousness. In particular, J.-P. Sartre tried to socialise Freudianism, identify social determinants of the development of the child's psyche, and analyse the mechanisms of the child's assimilation of values and ideas.

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Existential analysis was not limited to the search for genetic or finalist explanations of child behaviour. Instead, it sought to unite the chain of everything that was caused by somatic, psychodynamic, and social factors into a coherent biography. Some psychoanalysts, such as G. Iurato (2021b), saw an existential basis in Freudianism, because, according to Freud's ideas, the self-affirmation of the individual is possible only when a person is in constant tension between the drives to life and death. That is, understanding a person is possible if one goes beyond his or her personality and the characteristics that other subjects give to this person, which have nothing to do with existential situations, the internal state of the individual, which can be comprehended exclusively through phenomenology (Kalmykov et al., 2021). Thus, existential analysis completely ignored attempts to categorise or classify a person according to a certain criterion. Accordingly, the education of the individual in existential analysis is reduced to the classical understanding of the teacher as an educator who accompanies the child on his or her path to self-realisation and preservation of integrity. The teacher should make efforts to understand the way of being and how the child's experience can affect his or her picture of the world. In this sense, the goal of education is to help children through "existential communication" to experience life experiences in a consistent way and to recreate their meaning here and now in order to plan their future in the long run.

### Originality

The originality of the research is an attempt to rethink the key ideas of existential analysis for their further implementation in the theory and practice of education. The article emphasises the differences between the concepts of "existential analysis" and "existential psychoanalysis". The attention is focused on the psychoanalytic interpretation of pedagogy, in particular, on the implementation of the meaning-forming context and the need to determine the vectors for learning. The research outlines the characteristics of such areas of existential analysis as L. Binswanger's Daseinsanalysis and V. Frankl's logotherapy.

### Conclusions

Given the current armed confrontations, humanitarian crisis and social catastrophes, the ideas of existentialism are becoming increasingly important for education. Today, the ideas of existential analysis encourage the consideration of the ethical component in pedagogical practice, aimed at anticipating possible life risks, choosing ways to achieve plans, accepting the limitations of desires, and explaining the reasonable enjoyment of life without excessive indulgence. Accordingly, to achieve this goal, recommendations are provided on how to work with children's motivation, the need to teach students to determine their place in the system of social relations by analysing their own desires and intentions for the future. This is especially true in the context of global uncertainty, when everyone faces misunderstanding of both external threats and internal conflicts. Given the increase in destructive human attitudes in society and a certain distortion of the ideas of humanism in education, we see prospects for further research in the study of other areas of psychoanalytic pedagogy, in particular in the context of the philosophical ideas of Neo-Freudianism, Neo-Jungianism and Neo-Adlerianism.

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## Екзистенціальний аналіз у теорії і практиці виховання

**Мета.** Стаття спрямована на переосмислення ключових ідей екзистенціального аналізу для сучасної теорії і практики виховання. **Теоретичний базис.** У дослідженні було використано такі теоретичні методи: аналіз, синтез, порівняння та узагальнення фундаментальних положень екзистенціального аналізу як однієї з течій сучасного психоаналізу. **Наукова новизна.** Охарактеризовано екзистенціальний аналіз (дазаїн-аналіз) Л. Бінсвангера і логотерапію В. Франкла для їх подальшого впровадження в педагогічну теорію і практику. Наголошено, що положення екзистенціального аналізу в освіті спрямовані на допомогу дитині в пошуку цілей і навчальної мотивації в умовах швидко змінюваного світу. Доведено, що екзистенціальний аналіз фокусується на ідеї повернення до традиційного бачення педагога як провідника дітей на шляху до їх самореалізації і пізнання себе. **Висновки.** Відзначено, що "екзистенціальне спілкування" учителя з учнями допомагає останнім пережити новий життєвий досвід, відтворити його сенс і планувати своє майбутнє в перспективі. Ідеї екзистенціального аналізу спонукають до врахування в педагогічній практиці етичного компонента, який спрямований на передбачення можливих ризиків у житті, вибір способів для досягнення планів, сприйняття обмеженості бажань і пояснення розумної насолоди від життя, без зайвих надмірностей. І щоб досягти цієї мети, надано рекомендації щодо роботи з мотивацією дітей, необхідністю навчати учнів визначати своє місце в системі суспільних відносин та обирати професію для служіння істині й людям.

**Ключові слова:** екзистенціалізм; екзистенціальний аналіз; екзистенціальний психоаналіз; педагогіка; психоаналітична педагогіка; філософія освіти

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