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Teacher candidate narratives about extreme social events: Implications for teacher education

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Abstract

The researchers examined the narratives of Ukrainian teacher candidates about an international conflict, which they perceived as an extreme event that could affect them. Discourse analysis revealed social variation in students' psychological processes used for understanding and explaining the same crisis. Gender differences in students' narratives demonstrated the need for enhanced instruction in teacher education. Students and teachers must recognize the effects of socialization on their analysis and response to an extreme social situation. After a description of our research in a Ukrainian university, we provide recommendations for teaching prospective teachers about extreme social events.

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Relevant research in education addresses the current questions and instructional needs that teachers have while facing a new problem or an ongoing one for which they do not feel adequately prepared to solve. Education in the context of social crisis needs examination in terms of teacher preparation (Sinclair, 2003). Teachers are challenged with helping students recognize their thought processes as they hear political and media accounts of social violence described as acts of "terrorism". We have faced such challenges in our own university courses where we began our research on this topic. Our study describes students' responses to an extreme social event and identifies the implications of our findings for teacher preparation. We exam-

ined the narratives of teacher candidates who were responding in their university class to an international crisis in close proximity. Our analysis of their narratives revealed social variation and a need for reflective metacognition that can reveal factors, which influence thinking about and responses to an extreme social event. This awareness is crucial for educators who are helping their students understand social crisis. Following the description of our research, we recommend strategies for teachers and their educators who are teaching in the context of or about extreme social events.

1. Research base

1.1. Theoretical background

There is a growing recognition among educators that radical ideological thinking forms underpin

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violent reactions to political conflicts (Hapon, 2002). Among many other incidences of public violence around the world, the tragedies of September 11, 2001 and October 23, 2002 have heightened American, Russian and Ukrainian worries about, as well as interest in, extreme social events. One constructive response has been a sentiment for expanding understanding of other nations' languages, cultures, and immediate needs in addition to our social, political, and economic interaction with their populations—understandings that the K-12 teacher is in a unique position to facilitate and imbue. Our roles as teacher trainers in classes where teacher candidates were responding to an extreme social event provided the opportunity for looking beyond prior studies of human behaviors in the context of crisis.

Research in Ukraine, Russia, and USA made the basis for our study. Research shows that female and male attitudes to an extreme event are shaped by their social–psychological nature. Our review evidenced psychological complexity of teaching based on variations from personal and social factors. Dorodnova (1998) and Yezhov (1998), studying gender differences in perception, found effectiveness of narrative analysis which allows openness through inclusion of personal experience in a rich data set. Such research reveals distinctions in perception and structuring of the environment. For example, males have been psychologically oriented towards modeling of their external world while the female orientation has been structuring of local spaces, or interior, and making it more humanized (Dorodnova, 1998).

Gender differences are reported in research on cognitive processes, human intellect, and emotions. Analysis of emotions and life relationships showed that males and females have different perceptions of marriage, love, “serious feelings”, business contacts, acquaintances, and each other (Yezhov, 1998). These differences highlight the interconnection of gender roles and expectations. Females in many cultures, including ours, are taught to show their emotions more freely and openly than males. Such women tend to describe the events of their inner life and subjective world, while males pay more attention to the events of their outer world (Hapon, 2002). In comparison with men, women typically develop greater impressiveness and sensitivity, which supports their role as local caretakers. When males express emotions, it can raise their status, which has advantages in dominance (Ivanova, 1999).

Social psychologists who studied gender distinctions note that existing differences are influenced by the system of gender beliefs or knowledge about the norms and “rules” of emotional behaviors in different life situations (Noddings, 1984; Shields, 2002). Socialization makes a decisive impact on the ways of gender reactions and on men and women's choice of emotional “norms”, especially in socio-cultural and family scenarios, which are based on personal experiences in the human development process. Family and peers, along with cultural and sub-cultural influences form role styles and models of interpersonal interactions of males and females. These styles and patterns of interpersonal behaviors of boys and girls are penetrated differently by emotions that form different cognitive skills for each gender. For example, boys develop more competitive behaviors and have more frequent displays of anger. Girls often learn to show the emotions of empathy, joy, disappointment, and sympathy. These emotions strengthen closeness and lessen aggressiveness among people (Hapon, 2002).

Research on the historical memories and behaviors of people in extreme social situations found an influence of social or collective memory (Cohen, 1989). This indicates the close interconnection between personality development and cultural–historical change. In the frames of such an approach, human memory is considered a function of reconstructing and constructing the past, which is submitted to the situation based on needs in the present and future. In other words, a person is constructing his/her past, rethinks it, and sees it in the different aspects from the point of view of today. It is possible to say the past our ‘material’ out of which people can build various theoretical constructions.

Cognitive modeling of the past is influenced by the sociocultural situation, in which a person exists. Barclay (1996), studying sociocultural influences and impacts of the historical contexts on the formation of the personal and autobiographical memory, found that sociocultural context influences indirectly the person's reproduction of certain events from the past. Sociocultural context is capable of making a strong impact on the meanings of people's personal stories and narratives, which are important for the construction of “self”. Consequently, sociocultural context can influence individual memory about social events, including extreme ones. In their examinations of memory, researchers described societal, historical, collective,

or political variations (Bauman, 1982; Connerton, 1989). The main feature that makes these notions close is preservation of major events in human memory, which can be restored not only by an individual, but also by its social groups. The events of the social life influence individual memories of its people, which along with other sources of information become the carrier of the collective or social memory.

The social memory (Bauman, 1982) reproduces and describes past events and society to maintain the existing social order. As Connerton (1989) asserts, members of any society should preserve in their memory those values, which unite them and make them co-participatory. The social memory holds the most significant events about the existing society as such: its organization, the structure of power, meanings of the past and present (Bodnar, 1992). This kind of memory represents a special set of beliefs, which helps the society understand its past, present, and future. Psychologists consider these beliefs as social representations (Moskovitch, 1996).

The social memory may keep beliefs, which can be very contradictory between human groups. Social representations are commonly recognized beliefs, those ideas and values, which contain people's suppositions and cultural ideology. Researchers, studying the social memory, discuss these contradictions among beliefs and suppositions that are coherent to an ideological group. The socio-cultural beliefs are connected with gender issues. Social representations about gender are different and possess their sociocultural specificity. Therefore, the collective and societal memory typically maintains gender values.

The collective memory also preserves and reproduces elements of the past that still exist and can continue to live in the consciousness of those groups of people. These can be: (a) small socioeconomic groups: educational, working, military collectives or groups, families, etc.; (b) small sociopolitical groups that represent interests of social-political institutions such as trade union groups, scouts, etc.; (c) unofficial groups connected by the criteria of "spending free time"; (d) age groups connected by similarity of the life conditions, needs, and interests; and (e) territory groups connected by the place of living. The specificity of these groups is strengthened by the gender factor. A group's collective memory gives its members gender frames for recollections. As Halbwachs (1980) writes,

"...everything what we recollect, we preserve inside that thinking space that is created by the group" (p. 46).

Historical memory is a way of understanding and finding the content of the historical past. In socio-psychological research we see how social beliefs reproduce the problems of the past. It was not coincidental that educational and psychological studies of 1940s were devoted mainly to the phenomena of precautions and ethnical biases at the time when the fascism was developing in Europe. Or in the 1950s, Western science applied its social analyses to the problems of social biases and intolerance towards other people's thoughts and conformism. In the 1960s, when the society of USA was characterized by the civil turmoil and militarist attitudes, one could observe the rise of interest in examining aggression. The youth movements of the 1970s led to the scrutiny of gender differences and sexism. During the 1980s, researchers were interested in the socio-psychological aspects of the military arms race. By the 1990s, research broadened with inclusion of intercultural-interaction foci (Koshmanova, 1999). These socio-psychological trends influenced social memory and subsequent research. For our own research, we considered the factors of past studies in social psychology and education, as well as their methodologies.

Social beliefs, reactions, and memory have been examined with qualitative methods of research, chiefly through incorporation of narrative analysis. Though cognitive processes such as memory perceptions were also studied with quantitative research, we recognized limitations of that approach for uncovering norms of autobiographical, social, and collective memory. Qualitative methods such as investigation through narrative analysis, unlike quantitative ones, are directed toward a broad spectrum of phenomenology. Narrative analysis reveals data, such as reason-outcome explanations, which are useful for examining human cognition. The unconscious motivational elements of different perceptions produced by the sociocultural impacts and individual consciousness are evident through discourse analysis.

Methods of examining narrative data have been used for studying social opinions that are influenced by messages of mass media (Mel'nikova, 1996). Social thinking and memory of individuals and groups are evident in narrative data. For example, narrative was used for studies of war responses. Research findings of Ivanova (1999), who studied

recollections of World War II, showed that female memories were evaluative and influenced by emotional relationships, whereas male memories held details of events such as battle statistics. The research indicated that the female's hierarchy of the meaningful, personal, and intimate events has been constructed differently than that of males. Females interpreted the world without strictly keeping to the chronology of the events. While focusing on chronology, male thinking can lose its flexibility. Women's constructs contained less binary oppositions than those of males. For example, the opposition "our man—an enemy" was not always realized by both genders in behavioral and thinking attitudes during such an extreme life situation as war (Usmanova, 2000). Through narrative analysis, differences across language interpretations are quite noticeable as well such as versions of an event represented by the mass media and participants' own experiences preserved in their memory (Usmanova, 2000).

Relevant to our field of teacher education, there is a pedagogical value of using narrative analysis. As a social construct, this method displays social learning, which illustrates the content of the studied phenomenon. When changes of the sociocultural situation lead to formation of different narratives about a studied event, deeper and pluralistic learning can occur through analysis of narrative data. Recognizing the value of narrative to examine context and identity bases of understanding, which Connelly and Clandinin (1999) identify through stories, we considered those factors in the writings of teacher candidates. We were mindful of Polkinghorne's (1988) theory that more authentic thoughts are revealed in stressful circumstances than through less threatening or otherwise troubling situations in which socially acceptable discourse is more common.

1.2. *Cultural and social impacts on gender roles*

Defining culture as a synthesis of learned behaviors that are fundamental to human identity, thinking, and learning in a particular community of people (Lasonen, 2003), one usually thinks about education and gender roles internalized through socialization. However, discussions about gender, especially feminism, have been mainly conducted in Western Europe and America, while Eastern European cultural studies have been predominantly focused on nationalism in education, history, and

economic difficulties. There is a tendency to characterize the post-totalitarian nations of Eastern Europe as separatist, authoritarian, potentially anti-semitic, nationalistic, and peace-threatening (Bohachevsky-Chomiak, 2004). In the case of Ukraine, the interpretation of state formation process is rather misleading—connected with economic and political instability and the dilemmas of cultural heritage of the nation (Koshmanova, 2003; Batt, 1998).

Following the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukraine inherited the Soviet model of education. The communist system was characterized by deep respect for theoretical knowledge, strong liberal arts tradition, serious students with a strong sense of community, and no market pressures, which reduces the importance of practical applications of knowledge (Clark & Koshmanova, 2000). This combined with the deeply rooted Ukrainian culture of spirituality, morality, and traditional gender roles have led to a rather conservative tradition of learning inconsistent with the needs of a slowly emerging civil society (Koshmanova, 2003).

For decades, Eastern European women had always been used, nearly voluntarily, for building communist societies that promised equality. However, the reality of the communist society denied women's rights in everyday life, and today "females' problems are nothing more than the rights of men, spread over the whole population" (Bohachevsky-Chomiak, 2004, p. 16). This equality for Eastern European women led to twice the pressure: to work for income as a provider and to work at home as domestic caretakers. By a tradition, which survived through centuries, Ukrainian females are expected to be mothers, nurturers, and housewives, while males are supposed to be workers, feeders, and political leaders. Predominantly, biological reproduction and caring for families are considered to be social goals for females: 70% of the Ukrainians consider that females should have children for their social realization; all the other roles (for example, career) are secondary and less valuable (Vorona & Ruchka, 2000).

Though females' roles as mothers continue to dominate in popular opinion, Ukraine belongs to a group of countries where women's well-paid jobs are socially approved (Oksamytna, 2004). During the last decade, Ukrainian females are slowly beginning to dominate over males in the roles of family feeders—immigrants who work abroad to support families staying in Ukraine. According to

Bilozir (2004), Ukrainians make 10% (7 million people) of world labor immigration (67 million people) and 70% of this number are females.

Education is the only social institution in Ukraine where gender balance is achieved. At the level of secondary and higher education, Ukrainian females exceed the number of graduates in comparison with males; however, male graduates dominate at the doctoral level of studies (Vlasenko, Vynohradova, & Kalachova, 2000).

Researchers consider that the double-occupancy problem is in women themselves (Vorona & Ruchka, 2000). Influenced by social circumstances and cultural impacts, Ukrainian females still do not manage to develop their identity, self-esteem, and recognizable historical consciousness. Absence of feminism as a widely spread outlook or as an alternative theory of culture and social movement, is accompanied by numerous demonstrations of feministic phobia, a vulgar image of feminism as an incompatible phenomenon with the Ukrainian society: this feministic phobia is spread even among administrative and academic circles (Oksamytna, 2004).

The majority of Eastern European authors consider feminism as “import from the West” (Oksamytna, 2004) and one “which has absolutely no connection to them because women already celebrate all the equality and recognition which they can only dream about” (Bohachevsky-Chomiak, 2004, p. 13). However, comparative research on learning public opinion about political, economic, and social roles of women conducted by Gallup International (Millennium Survey, 2000) in 60 countries of the world pointed to a considerable remoteness of the Ukrainian society from the developed liberal-democratic countries in gender equality. Surveys conducted by Ukrainian researchers also showed that gender stereotypes, which correspond to patriarchal ideology, dominate popular opinion (Vorina & Chornovolenko, 2000). According to Oksamytna (2004), Ukrainian mass media continue to be active disseminators of patriarchal stereotypes but not modern democratic views on gender relationships in the society.

In Ukraine (like in other countries of the world), the least patriarchal and traditional views are of young women (less than 25 years old); most often they are carriers of democratic gender outlooks that deny discriminative attitudes towards females in families, at the market of jobs, and in the sphere of political power distribution (Vlasenko et al., 2000).

It is interesting that age does not practically influence the formation of Ukrainian male expectations of female roles: both young and middle-age males share patriarchal gender stereotypes (Vorona & Ruchka, 2000). The study’s participants less than 25 years old and their perceptions of the social crisis seemed to be consistent with our analysis of culturally bound gender roles.

2. Goals and tasks

This study examined the psychological processes of teacher candidates evident in their narratives while they were in teacher training at a Ukrainian university. The students’ narratives were responses to the extreme social events on and around October 23, 2002 in Moscow at the Theatre Center on Dubrovka. That crisis was the first identified “terrorist” act in the history of Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union during which Chechens sieged an international audience, who gathered at the Theatre Center to see the performance “Nord Ost”. Although none of the students from the university site of this study were among the audience at the Theatre Center, they followed attentively the information about the extreme event, which was described by the mass media and governments as a “terrorist act”.

The goals of this study included analysis of the psychological structures of students’ narratives to assess their learning needs and elaboration of educational strategies for teacher preparation. An international group of teacher educators in Ukraine and USA collaborated in this research to broaden our understanding and training of teacher candidates who are coping with and will be teaching about extreme social events in or beyond their region.

3. Method

3.1. Setting

Our study occurred at one of the largest and oldest national universities of Ukraine that prepares teachers for their future practice. The constructivist program of pre-service teacher education offered in the university was undergraduate and graduate level programs that allowed students to earn Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees and K-12 teaching certification. The constructivist approach, in contrast to approaches that view the purpose of the teacher as

merely transmitting knowledge, requires students to be active and critical participants in the formation of their intellectual development and to evaluate their performance in terms of its effects upon children, schools, and society (Sunal & Haas, 2002; Clark & Koshmanova, 2000).

3.2. Participants

Student diversity was mainly economic although they were predominantly of the middle class with very few ethnic and racial differences. There were more female $N = 67$ participants than males $N = 54$. The students ranged in age from 17 to 23 years, with an average age of 20. The student participants ($N = 121$) were undergraduates enrolled in the following departments. The first group from the Department of International Relations was freshmen and sophomores who were prospective social studies teachers and embassy employees who will work in national institutions with international political responsibility for Ukraine. The second group from the Philological Department was freshmen, sophomores, and juniors who were training as future teachers of the Ukrainian, Slavic, or Persian languages and literature.

3.3. Data collection and procedures

We collected information from a variety of sources to construct the analysis for the present study. Primary data sources consisted of the students' narratives. For literature review and elaboration of the theoretical framework, we used international research findings including those published in Ukraine, Russia, and USA. Our own collective experiences during decades of teacher education and our former practices of primary and secondary level teaching influenced our analysis and the educational implications of our findings.

The Ukrainian students voluntarily participated in the study during regular class periods when the data was collected during the week after the October 23 event. Students present in the class were asked to write about the crisis of October 23, 2002. The narratives were analyzed during the following month in three two-day sessions. The qualitative analysis of the narratives demanded attentive work and reflection. During the first two-day session, students' narratives were reviewed and initial generalizations were discussed. After initial data analysis, we constructed individual case summaries

of students. Each initial data analysis involved scrutiny of information that was relevant to the study's focus. During the second two-day session, data was reviewed and coded according to a matrix that was developed to help focus our interest on the analysis within the parameters we defined during the preparatory stage and literature review. Data within these broad categories was then subjected to further analysis, using research methods described by Barclay (1996). In the final two-day session, narratives were coded and direct quotes were collected for evidence. Our informative analysis of participants' interpretations of the extreme social event derived from prior research in or related to our own field.

3.4. Theoretical framework and terminology

The narrative analysis was grounded in the works of Barclay (1996) and Gergen and Gergen (1988). Analysis of narrative facilitates research in the social and humanitarian sciences for analyzing social-psychological, cognitive, perceptive processes, social attitudes, memory, and affect. As a social construct, the narrative method promotes formation and preserving of social-cognition processes.

Like Gergen and Gergen (1988), we coded three narrative forms: *progressive*, *stability*, and *regressive* narrative codes. *Progressive* narratives begin with a negative estimation and finishes with a positive estimation. *Stability* narratives start with a negative or a positive estimation, and finish with negative or positive judgments, so the initial estimation of the narrative beginning does not change. *Regressive* narratives start with a progressive evaluation of the information and finish with a negative estimation of the situation.

From Barclay (1996), who measured narrative information and organization, we derived information codes for narratives such as *heroes* and *event localization*. For narrative organization we identified: *time structure* (time-spacious and reason-outcome), density of the narrative (the quantity of the sentences in the narrative), and *narrative functions* (orientate, content or the sequence of events, evaluative). Orientate narratives inform when and where as well as who is involved in an occurrence. Narrative functions included historical and time frames and sociocultural in addition to psychological evidence. Content information revealed the order of occurrences or sequences. In the evaluative

function the emotional subjectivity was evident and the storyteller's perspective may have changed from negative to positive or the reverse in the narrative.

4. Findings

Students' narratives revealed social variation in their psychological processes used for understanding and explaining an extreme social situation. Socialization factors such as gender were evident in the variation of responses the students displayed in their narratives. Analysis of the narratives on the basis of the *form* gave a richer sense of the students' reactions to the Moscow theater tragedy and illustrated the differences in responses along personality, gender, religion, and social orientations.

Progressive narratives (17%) began with negative estimations of the events in Dubrovka, and finished with a positive, optimistic estimation such as "Chechens maliciously captured Musical Center... fortunately, hostages were liberated". Or another example: "It is bad that the Chechens are struggling under a religious banner, and believe that even their death will be rewarded in the heavens... Fortunately, God did not allow transforming the theater into a huge cemetery" or "the Chechens who captured the Center, did very badly having not dismissed children immediately. A popular in Chechnya singer had to strive for children's liberation... It is good that just a few kids remained in the auditorium".

There were fixed (1%) *regressive* narratives that started with a positive estimation and finished with a negative one. For example, "The struggle for independence and liberation of the Chechen people continues. They do not lose their spirits... unfortunately, this terrorist act did not increase the quantity of the sympathizing people to the Chechens, to their struggle for liberty". Or another example: "When spectators were sitting and waiting for the beginning of the performance, they did not know that there were their potential killers among them... I think people were shocked when terrorists rose from their seats and directed the guns at them... It is hard to imagine that a person who was sitting near by you and looked at the stage with inspiration, in a minute became your enemy". This regressive narrative showed students' religious attitudes: "When anti-terrorist brigade spread out unknown gas into the auditorium to put the Chechen terrorists to temporary sleep, they did not calculate correctly the amount of gas because hundreds of people got

to sleep; and they all were taken by ambulances to different hospitals of Moscow ... Unfortunately, more than half a hundred people never awoke... this is horrible that so many people died. Hopefully they were taken by God, but it would be better if they stayed alive". Another regressive narrative showed gender specificity of the Ukrainian females: "I think it is good that Putin did not fulfill the demands of the terrorists because the whole Moscow would turn into terrorist sites who would keep requiring new concessions. However, the power should also have thought how to minimize the victims at the theater; there were very many people from different nations who never came home".

The majority of students had *stability* narratives (82%), which started with a negative or a positive estimation and finished with negative or positive judgments, or their information did not change throughout their narrative. For example: "Absolutely innocent people were captured... many of them became victims because of non-thought over actions of leaders of anti-terrorist operation". The following stability narratives showed gender and religious aspects: "I was terrified to learn that the Chechens captured hostages at the theater that started calling my relatives who live in Moscow, but nobody replied" and "I think this terrorist act in Moscow was a result of non-thought over politics of those who had power. The impression is that nobody, except for God, thought about the Russians and the Chechens".

Students, with statically negative descriptors displayed high emotions and pessimistic evaluations such as "a horrible event", "a threat to life", and "the end of the world". They also expressed their concerns about the future.

Identification of *heroes* of the narrative and their *characteristics* showed students thought the main positive heroes of the beginning and middle of the narratives were "hostages" (48% of the narratives), the ambivalent heroes were "government's crisis team" (20% of the narratives), and the Chechens (32% of the narratives).

While hostages and the government's crisis team were described as positive heroes at the beginning of the narrative, the team and the Russian government were later identified as ambivalent and negative participants in the crisis or the heroes of the narrative ending (60% of the narratives). The positive heroes of the narratives endings were the Chechens. The Chechens became positive heroes

because they were mainly women and they all were killed at the place of the tragedy. Students remarked about the non-effectiveness of the government team's actions, which actually resulted in great harm to people in the theatre.

The next parameter was the *location* where the event happened. Here some typical gender differences were evident. Females had a distinct time-spacious localization—"The Theater Center on Dubrovka" (their time-spacious localization did not leave the event site). The narratives of males showed that spacious localization of the event went beyond the limits of the Theater Center extending to Russia, Chechnya, USA, and Afghanistan. For example, "The events in Dubrovka were not a single fact. Now the whole world is embraced by terrorism... New generations are growing up (like it happens in Afghanistan) where children of fighters learn to use weapons before they learn to walk", and "The struggle for the national interests of the Chechens, or bloody events in Yugoslavia, shows the Nation does not value lives of common people" or "What do those fighters for the Nation think about taking away thousands of people's lives in Trade Centers, theaters, and stores?..."

In the organization of the narrative, we analyzed *time structure*. Time structure of the beginning and the middle of the narratives differed from the structure of the ending of the narrative. Events in the narratives' beginnings had linear structures: one event was happening after another one. Research shows that the beginning and the middle of the narratives (88%) had a time-spacious structure. And only a few narratives (12%) had reason-outcome structures. Time-spacious structure of the ending of the students' narratives is shown in the following data: students' narratives here (84%) had reason-outcome structures. It means that the majority of the students' narratives deviated from the official versions of the event descriptions and reflected a growing crisis in Chechnya, Russia, and in the whole world. For example: "Nations, parties, communities, presidents, or governments do not seem to have any power over the world. The only governor is the weapon".

In the *density* of the narrative, females had a range of high (40%), medium (22%), and low (38%) density. Those female students who showed a high degree of density, reproduced in a full detail the information they heard from mass media while those with a low-density degree had an answer format to the following question used to prompt

their writing: "What will happen to us?" "How to live after this?" "Could not people compromise?" The narratives of the males had a full range that was greater in density: medium (73%), high (17%), and low (10%).

The last parameters of the analysis were narrative *functions* (orientate, content or the sequence of events, evaluative). The orientate function of females displayed more psychological affect; personal troubles, worries about friends and relatives who might have been at the crisis site. Males' narratives primarily displayed social-cultural meanings, clear reason-outcomes and time-spacious logic of events. The following was their typical content or sequence of the event function pattern. The beginning of the war in Chechnya (the reason of the war)—military actions of Russia—international terrorism—terrorist acts in USA—the places of the terrorist acts in Russia.

The evaluative function of the males (68%) was less clear than in the narratives of females. Most often, the narratives of the male students finish with such words: "Struggle of the Chechen people continues", "The Russian government is fighting with terrorism", "The Ukrainian government supports the struggle with terrorism", and "Both Ukrainians and Russians consider that this struggle should avoid terrorist methods".

The 71% of the females' narratives had openly evaluative and more decisive judgments (in comparison with males); the girls accuse "terrorists" of crimes against people and demand that the Russian government should defend people from terrorism. They wrote: "Terrorism—is a horrible phenomenon, this is a mistake of those groups of people who want to achieve liberty using criminal actions", "I want the Ukrainian power to defend my relatives and me from the fear of terrorism and those worries, which we feel visiting theatres".

Most clear gender differences are seen in students' evaluative judgments about the Chechen women who were in the terrorist group. Cognizant of possible gender influences, we analyzed separately female and male narratives. Female students wrote about personalities of the Chechen women, who actually became organizers of the terrorist event in Dubrovka.

Students' evaluative judgments shown in their narratives were classified as *positive, neutral or ambivalent, negative, and missing*. We found the majority of female narratives were *neutral* and *ambivalent* (83%). Those narratives lacked distinct

characteristics of women and they employed less categorical judgments. *Negative* female narratives (8%) expressed non-acceptance of a woman's personality as a terrorist. *Missing* judgments were observed in 4% of the narratives, and *positive* ones—in 5% of the female narratives. Examples of female's evaluative strategies include: "These women are struggling for their freedom in non-human way", "They took the side of harm and evil for the sake of good and goodness" (*ambivalent* attitudes). "These women lost their husbands, fathers, brothers, and children and therefore they stood on the side of their fatherland defense" (*positive* judgments). Females' narratives expressed a desire for understanding the complexity of a Chechen woman's life. Females' evaluated more than males the women's participation in a terrorist group. Females' description of them demonstrated a more positive attitude by interpretation of the local story of the contemporary Chechen women. Males included more concrete information about the event's antecedents. Males' narratives about the role of a woman in a terrorist group were limited to two evaluative meanings: *positive* (60%) and *negative* (40%). Male judgments about a place for a woman in the terrorist group included the following: "They personified despair of all the Chechen women, led to the utmost feeling of lost hope by the situation of war", "They are representatives of the Chechen nation, they are in despair... their feminineness, humanism, and mercifulness lost any sense for them" (*positive* judgments). "These are pathological persons, possibly addicted to drugs, or money—motivated" (*negative* attitude). Where positive heroes (except for hostages) were missing in males' narratives, women in the terrorist group were evaluated as "pathological", "fond of money", and "drugs addicted".

Social-cultural factors were evident in the students' cognitive processes displayed through their narratives. Values and beliefs are derived from experience with culture. Culture influences the construction of cognitive and behavioral gender-role expectations within societies. Each society produces and reproduces the idea of how females and males should intellectually and socially respond to conflict. Only if we analyze how these patterns work together and recreate current situations within gender roles, we will have the knowledge to go beyond traditional expectations and build a new way of living together in peace (Reardon, 2001). The students evidenced a need for training to

recognize their cognitive orientations resulting from different factors in their understanding of and responses to an extreme public event.

Our study showed that without training in analysis of human conflict, especially cross-cultural problems, which can become extreme, and peace processes, new teachers might pass on limited perspectives, skills, and emotional behaviors that impede understanding of complex conflicts which can become extreme social situations (Long, 1990). Intercultural cooperation is a foundation for peaceful national and international citizenship (Bennett, 1986; Salomon & Nevo, 2002).

In Ukrainian society where separatism was government policy and negative stereotypes formed as an outcome of that division, teaching skills and dispositions of intercultural cooperation through teacher education is essential. As in USA where teacher educators employ the transformative model of multicultural education (Banks, 1997), their Ukrainian colleagues also face a challenging task of implementing and researching social education strategies for preventing or responding to extreme social situations.

The findings highlighted an urgent need to educate pre-service teachers in critical and reflexive inquiry and analysis as well as peaceful conflict resolution possibilities. The teacher candidates in our study evidenced a need for training to recognize their cognitive orientations resulting from different factors in their understanding of and responses to an extreme public event. Below we recommend strategies for teaching about those skills as well as responding to conflicts and extreme social situations in school.

5. Implications for teacher education

We recommend that teacher educators, curriculum developers, and government agencies provide education for preservice teachers with ample opportunities for writing about, discussing and then analyzing their own responses to conflicts or crises.

Reflective metacognition should be practiced in several courses for teacher candidates. Such reflective analysis could help them recognize the limitations of their perspectives of, information about, and cognitive processes in their communication about conflicts or crises (Koshmanova, Carter, & Hapon, 2003). Before instructing and helping others in conflict and crisis, one must first recognize one's own mental context, habits, and limitations.

Training in social and cognitive psychological processes, especially those influenced by culture and useful for planning peaceful interaction should be extended to all teacher candidates, not just those who are studying to be mental health practitioners in schools (Bandura, 1986; Hutchinson, 1996). Further, we suggest that preservice teachers receive regular instruction in emotional literacy and management, as well as compassionate communication; skills that they will need continually regardless of the extremity of conflicts they face in their careers and beyond (Carter, 2002; Goleman, 1995; Rosenberg, 2000).

Interactive learning strategies in university courses such as simulations, cooperative role plays, and group critiques of media presentations can model for teacher candidates, in addition to facilitating their self- and group-reflections, how they might assist their future students in rehearsals for or actual responses to social conflicts and crises. To provide assurance during social crises or learn about how major conflicts have and can be constructively resolved, students should be directed to information about current and past peace builders throughout their own community, their nation, and the world (Thee, 1995).

While studying the processes of peace, students should be shown two important foundations. One is the value of combining gender-targeted approaches in analysis of and response to crisis. Individuals throughout the world who have recognized the extensive breadth and antecedents of extreme social situations while maintaining a steadfast ethic of care have been highly successful leaders in the resolution of conflict before, or after, it became an extreme situation. Teacher educators should model these behaviors through thinking aloud and sharing their ideas about the conflicts they address with their own students. Through and beyond lessons of social education, teachers can find ample opportunities for conflict resolution where multiple perceptions of events are shaped by socialized identity (Carter, 2004).

By analyzing contextual influences, examining social conflicts and crises, students develop more than cognitive skills. They prepare for comprehensive problem solving that addresses the needs of all who are or were involved in a social conflict. A second foundation of teaching for peace is futures planning (Hutchinson, 1996). Great peace makers in a variety of cultures have begun with a vision of a better way. It is important in childhood and teacher education to engage in futures planning that helps

students picture and prepare for peaceful living. Widespread practice of these skills in these two foundations of learning about peace might reduce the occurrence of extreme social events. In a world without such crises, those skills would augment social understanding, synergy, and human harmony.

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