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MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AND ITS ESSENTIAL ROLE IN PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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The article focuses on multicultural education as the key factor in professional training of university students. The authors examine the Russian educational system, which is based on the national educational standard and shapes the content of education in accordance with the structure of the Russian national identity, seeking to preserve and disseminate the ethnocultural heritage and national cultures throughout Russia and beyond. The article looks at the foundational concepts of education and culture and examines the nature, principles, and objectives of multicultural education which have emerged as a result of the new paradigm in the system of professional training in response to the new challenges of the modern time and the ideas of the Bologna process promoted by leading European universities. The research methods include monitoring, interviews, and content analysis. The outcomes of the study show that all levels of Russian education should be represented in the system of multicultural education, including preschool, elementary school (grades 1–4), general secondary school (grades 5–9), full secondary school (grades 10–11) as well as other institutions of secondary, higher, and continuous education. The main principles of multicultural education are the national and cultural basis of education, humanist transparency, and learner-centered approaches. The main objective of multicultural education is the building-up of competencies that contribute to the successful all-round development of an individual in a multiethnic society. The article reviews the experimental research conducted by the scholars of the Vladimir branch of the Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation and its practical outcomes, which further prove that comprehensive interaction of traditional and innovative teaching methods and approaches in professional training and individual development is only possible within the balanced framework of monocultural and multicultural formats of higher education. The outcomes of the research are used in organizing the educational process in the Vladimir branch of the Financial University and recommended for implementation in other institutions of higher education, since the interaction between traditions and innovations within the global education highlights the main function of multicultural education: turning out modern professionals who are ready to face the challenges of real life and work in the globalizing society.

Key words: multicultural education; vocational training and learning; individual and cultural self-determination; dialogue of cultures; global educational space.

Поликультурное образование и его роль в воспитании и обучении студентов вуза

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Статья посвящена вопросу поликультурного образования как важнейшему фактору в воспитании и обучении студентов высшей школы. Цель исследования состоит в изучении образовательной системы, которая в рамках единого государственного образовательного стандарта формирует содержание обучения и воспитания в соответствии со структурой российской идентичности, руководствуясь целями трансляции этнокультурного наследия и национальных культур народов России в широком контексте российской и мировой цивилизации. Предмет исследования включает понятия образования и культуры. В исследовании раскрываются сущность, основные принципы, цели и задачи поликультурного образования, появившегося в результате развития новой парадигмы высшего профессионального образования в ответ на вызовы времени и все более глубокого проникновения идеи Болонского процесса в совершенствование деятельности европейских вузов. Методы исследования включают наблюдение, опрос и контент-анализ. В результате исследования было выявлено, что в системе поликультурного образования должны быть представлены все уровни российского образования: учреждения дошкольного образования, начального (1–4 классы), основного общего (5–9 классы), полного общего (10–11 классы), учреждения среднего, высшего и дополнительного образования. Основными принципами поликультурного воспитания являются национально-культурная основа воспитания, гуманистическая открытость и личностная ориентированность. Ведущей целью поликультурного образования признаётся формирование компетенций, способствующих успешному всестороннему развитию личности в полиэтничном обществе. В статье приводятся результаты экспериментального проекта на базе Владимирского филиала Финансового университета при Правительстве Российской Федерации и его практические результаты, подтверждающие комплексное взаимодействие традиционных и инновационных средств обучения и воспитания, обеспечивающих равномерное развитие личности только в условиях баланса между монокультурным и поликультурным форматом вуза. Полученные результаты имеют практическое применение при организации учебно-воспитательного процесса во Владимирском филиале Финансового университета. Рекомендуется учитывать опыт внедрения результатов исследования при работе со студентами высших учебных заведений, поскольку взаимосвязь традиций и инноваций позволяет определить основную функцию поликультурного образования, ориентирующего выпускников высших учебных заведений на жизнь и трудовую деятельность в реальном глобализирующемся мире.

Ключевые слова: поликультурное образование; профессиональное образование и обучение; индивидуальное и культурное самоопределение; диалог культур; глобальное образовательное пространство.

1. Introduction

The ideas and practices of multicultural education, propelled to the foreground by the challenges of preparing younger generations for life in a multinational and multicultural environment, grew particularly relevant in 1990s, when

intensive integration processes and the desire of Russia to become part of the European and global socio-cultural and educational space while preserving its national identity became important socio-political determinants of multicultural education. Age-old psychological oppositions “*friend – stranger*” and “*I – not I*” continue to prevent people from living and working in multi-ethnic environments, and it’s not a surprise that problems of multicultural education are attracting more and more teachers, psychologists, and politicians globally. In today’s society we desperately need to learn the art of living with people who are different from us.

The foundation for multicultural education is provided by a number of Russian and foreign traditions in philosophy, pedagogics, and psychology. The concept of multicultural education emerged in the West in the 1970s, but its roots go much farther back, to the Enlightenment and earlier. The ideas of multiculturalism could be seen in the works by A. Diesterweg and J. Pestalozzi and certainly in “*The Pampaedia*” by J. Comenius, where the great Czech teacher proposed a system for developing a holistic and mature identity in a society where all individuals should possess encyclopedic knowledge: essentially a universal education program for the entire human race. Moreover, the formation of children’s ability to live in peace with others, fulfill mutual obligations, and respect and love other people was a significant part of his original program. Later, N. Roerich wrote about the *beneficial synthesis* as a *unity of cultures*, seeing in this a beneficial cooperation of people of different nationalities. L. Vygotsky drew some important conclusions about multicultural education within the framework of the cultural-historical theory of behavior and psyche. According to this theory, the sources and determinants of mental and emotional development lie in a historically developing culture. Ideas and conclusions about multicultural education, even though some of them utilize different language and concepts, can be found in the works by renown Russian educators A. Makarenko, V. Sukhomlinsky, and K. Ushinsky (Kolobova 2006).

In a globalizing world, the problem of multicultural education is becoming increasingly important. The contemporary society gives us every incentive to seek and find new paradigms for providing a better training for students in institutions of higher education, especially if we take into account the challenges of our time and the ever deeper and more comprehensive implementation of the ideas of the Bologna process in European universities.

The official Framework for the Development of Multicultural Education, developed in accordance with the National Doctrine of Education of the Russian Federation, sees multicultural education as an educational system which is part of the integrated federal educational standard and which defines the content of training and education in terms of shaping the Russian national identity. One of

its central goals is to preserve and disseminate the ethno-cultural heritage and national cultures throughout Russia and beyond. It must be noted, though, that the development of multicultural education in Russia can only have the desired impact if it goes along with the overall development of the national educational system, which continues to actively seek for new ideas and methods for training the younger generation and now faces the challenges of an entirely new set of ethical, psychological, social, political, and economic goals. Peace and social stability are only possible if the ongoing modernization of the Russian education system remains in agreement with the general trends of global development.

2. Material and Methods

The multicultural education system includes all levels of Russian education: pre-school, elementary school (grades 1–4), general secondary school (grades 5–9), full secondary school (grades 10–11) as well as other institutions of secondary, higher, and continuous education. Before focusing on the nature, principles, goals, and objectives of multicultural education, it is highly important to clarify the definition of two key concepts: the concept of *education* and the concept of *culture*.

Based on the existing variety of definitions of “education,” we propose the following working definition of the concept in its broad sense: *Education* is a relatively independent, multi-faceted, open, pedagogically and psychologically verified system of various methods of a person’s socialization with the main purpose to educate and train both the individual and the society in the process of active and successful development of the cultural heritage of the mankind. It is just as important to clarify the definition of such a complex philosophical concept as “culture.” In Russian and foreign literature there are over 500 different definitions of this phenomenon, and most of them are based on the notion that culture is a constantly improving mechanism for the development of creative activities which transform both humanity and the world. Every man-made object that exists on Earth is the result of an individual person’s life and creative work, both physical and non-material. Definitions emerge from the origin of the word “culture”: based on the Latin “*cultura*,” it stands for *cultivation, processing; upbringing, education, development, veneration and worship*.

In considering the basic essential characteristics of multicultural education, it is important to note that, first of all, multicultural education should include the study of the national culture and its traditions. Furthermore, if we take into consideration the growing number of foreign students in Russian universities, it spells out the need for the development of bicultural education of foreign students from Russian minority language groups as well as young people from European and Asian countries.

Moreover, pedagogy has a great importance in multicultural education. It takes into account and develops the following important pedagogical principles: 1) human dignity; 2) high moral principles, and 3) tolerance and readiness for mutual cooperation with people of other nationalities. All this requires a close collaboration of psychologists, the faculty involved in teaching the disciplines included in university curricula, as well as the faculty and staff engaged in conducting extracurricular activities, since all these can and should contribute to the formation of young people's ideas about the diversity of national cultures and their importance for individual self-realization and self-fulfillment.

The main principles of multicultural education are the national and cultural basis of education, humanist transparency, and learner-centered approaches. The goals and objectives of multicultural education are to educate students in the spirit of pluralism, equality, and unity (Dzhurinskiy 2002: 13–14), producing individuals who are able to lead a proactive and effective life in multicultural environments, participating in peaceful collaborative activities with people of different nationalities, races, and beliefs (Makaev, Mal'kova, Suprunova 1999: 6). With the support of schools and other educational institutions, families, and public organizations, multicultural education aims to promote and develop Russia as a democratic state, which practices tolerance of people's views and judgments, recognizes and develops cultural pluralism in the society, and respects individuals' right to free choice regarding their own cultural identity (Dmitriyev 1999: 34).

The main objective of multicultural education is the building-up of competencies that contribute to the successful all-round development of an individual in a multiethnic society. Reviewing and summing up existing literature on the subject, I. Bessarabova identifies the following main outcomes of multicultural education within the framework of higher education:

- a deep and comprehensive mastery of the national culture
- students' diversity-friendly attitude to global cultures
- development of skills for effective interaction with representatives of different cultures
- educating students in the spirit of peace, tolerance and humane inter-ethnic communication
- development of students' ability for individual and cultural self-determination (Bessarabova 2008: 98).

Since the main source and foundation of multicultural education is found in the national and global cultural heritage in its overall and universal diversity, discussions of both historically accumulated and current achievements in natural sciences and humanities in the local, national, and global context could be a potentially powerful tool in modern multicultural university education. Thus over-

all university curricula and programs for specific disciplines should focus on interdisciplinary connections as well as take into account the interests of future employers, providing students with theoretical knowledge in conjunction with its practical application.

3. Results and Discussion

In 2014–2020, the faculty of the Vladimir branch of the Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation carried out empirical research seeking to see how comprehensive use of traditional and innovative teaching methods could provide an important synergetic effect for maintaining psychological health and boosting individual students' intellectual and cultural development. The experiment included pedagogical follow-up, psychological screening, and a multi-level individual survey "Adaptability," conducted among undergraduates enrolled in Bachelor's programs in Economics (Yudina, Naumova 2019). Further annual psychological monitoring, using the standardized methods and techniques as well as socio-psychological and psychological testing, was provided at the end of the study with the goal to observe the changes in students' personal attitudes and individual motivation at the end of the first semester of each academic year. The outcomes of this monitoring helped to evaluate the following: 1) development and changes in students' individual psychological attitudes; 2) changes in motivational objectives, learning purposes, and views on professional work in the field of economics; 3) nature of personal relationships within academic groups (smaller groups within a class): overall attitudes and issues, group unity, and team spirit; and 4) likelihood of addictive behaviors.

It may be concluded that the innovative system of pedagogical follow-up for students, based on systematic development of students' personal creative potential, student team initiatives, students' growing social and cultural adaptability due to group visits to theaters, exhibitions, live music concerts etc., has proven itself to be effective in comparison with more traditional interactions with the faculty, as the results of the comparative analysis demonstrate positive outputs. The statistics show a 12 % increase of the neuro-psychiatric stability, a 18 % increase of communicative skills, a 30 % increase in adhering to moral principles, and a 20 % growth of the common indicator of the individual adaptation potential among undergraduates (Doroshenko, Zharkova, Naumova 2020a, 2020b; Malygin, Levina, Naumova 2020).

Organizationally, teaching students in multicultural modes can be successfully built on traditional methods and forms that have already proven their effectiveness: lectures, personal stories, conversations, dialogues, discussions, role-plays, debates, round tables, etc. According to Y. Lotman, dialogue as an act of

communication between cultures and a universal law of cultural development plays a particularly important role in the development of students' communication skills in a multicultural educational space (Siraeva 2008: 30). In fact, the whole process of teaching and character education is based on a continuous dialogue between the teacher and the learner, which tends to be an essential element of the so-called interactive learning and makes it possible to promote interdisciplinary cooperation within the pedagogical process, enabling students to listen and hear the interlocutor, to analyze the situation, to argue and resolve contradictions, and to find consensus and compromise.

Further experience of interpersonal and interethnic communication among students can be achieved through extra-curricular activities. These are various forms of social work, creative clubs, celebrations and meetings, including Freshman Convocation and Senior Graduation ceremonies, tours, field trips, international parties, days of national cultures and literature, days of national cuisine, costumes, and customs, foreign language days and international meetings, educational panel games, intellectual and creative competitions, theater performances, national and ethnic festivals. In view of the current challenges of multicultural education, these and many other types of such culture and diversity-promoting events and activities are of great and growing importance.

4. Conclusion

The success of multicultural education in our time is likely to become one of the main criteria for evaluating the work of higher education institutions since their primary purpose is to produce graduates who are ready to face real life and work in a multicultural world. Consequently, creating multicultural educational environments in universities is one of the most important and urgent challenges within the general framework of the higher education in Russia.

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