MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AS THE BASIS OF PROFESSIONAL LITERACY OF THE STUDENTS

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Abstract

Pedagogical activity at the University, based on a personal-activity approach to improving multicultural literacy of students, involves the development of reflection, tolerance, the ability to intercultural dialogue, understanding the universal values and the uniqueness of different cultures (Russian, European, American, Eastern, etc.). This approach in teaching allows us to identify the inner side of the relationship between a person and a multicultural environment, reflecting the diversity of spiritual and material forms of coexistence and interaction of diverse, equal and equivalent cultures and their representatives.

University graduates are aware of the importance of cultural differences that contribute to the mutual enrichment of values and experience of interaction, they perceive them positively, equally relate to the culture of their people and other cultures, they are less inclined to contrast them with each other. The study of the problem of forming the readiness of students to communicate in a multicultural environment makes a certain contribution to the possibility of educating a young person focused on understanding, tolerance, acceptance and respect for cultural diversity.

In modern society, ethnic conflicts, intolerance, lack of understanding of the problems of people of other faiths, ignorance by many students culture of other peoples and inability to choose the correct form of behavior towards representatives proves necessity for special work to prepare students to communicate in a multicultural environment. Students are called to adequately and dynamically contact with the world around them, with themselves, with other people, and skillfully interact with the multicultural environment.

The aim of our special pedagogical research in various areas of student life is to develop educational programs that take into account the necessity to develop students' basic knowledge of the multicultural environment, manners, rules of behavior in modern society, respect for the diversity of modern cultures (European, Russian, American, Eastern, etc.) and their representatives, skills of tactful behavior.

Our research shows that most students have difficulties with communication between the representatives of different cultures. Thus, when developing educational programs, we suggest including certain disciplines that actually focus on the acquisition of communication competence with representatives of other cultural groups.

Keywords: Multicultural literacy, intercultural dialogue, multicultural environment, educational programs, communication competence, multicultural education.

1 INTRODUCTION

Today it is becoming more and more obvious that modern society should develop within the framework of multiculturalism, when equality of all cultures, diversity and differences is recognized, racism, totalitarianism, any discrimination on national, religious, sexual and other grounds is completely excluded.

Modern society is developing in complex geopolitical conditions characterized by the processes of globalization. The result of globalization processes is multiculturalism as one of the alternative responses to the challenge of globalization on the fate of national cultures. Researchers interpret multiculturalism as practical tolerance, competence in the cultural and other assets of people living nearby. A number of philosophical ideas are used in the development of the theory of multiculturalism

in the world pedagogical science. There are two approaches to multiculturalism: positivist and systemic.

The positivist approach is based on the philosophy of positivism, and studies cultural values, norms, verbal and nonverbal behavior, the phenomenon of cultural shock, and cross-cultural transformations. This approach is also called analytical, reductionist, mechanistic, linear. It is followed by the vast majority of researchers and teachers in the field of multicultural education. There are two main reasons for the prevalence of the positivist approach: 1) achieving cultural awareness and intercultural competence; 2) today, the influence of the ideas of atomism, deductivism, the tendency to present reality in fragments, breaking it into separate parts that can be easily studied, is increasingly noted. Currently, multicultural education is taught mainly in the framework of a positivist approach. Even when the main goal is declared to be the achievement of cultural competence, which must be developed systematically.

The systematic approach in multicultural education emerged as an alternative to the traditional positivist approach and is based on holistic ideas of systemic theory. In this approach, culture is considered not as a set of individual elements (values, norms, customs, etc.), but as an interactive process of communication with other cultures, understood in its entirety. The systematic approach can be traced in the theories of cross-cultural transformation and convergence, developed within the framework of multicultural and global education.

Main provisions of the systematic approach are:

- The world is an open system, the main mechanism of existence and development is the interaction between cultures, as well as the individual and the environment.

- A polarizing, dichotomous vision of cross-cultural interaction simplifies the picture of the world and leads to the emergence of stereotypes and prejudices.

- Cross-cultural communication is not a direct, but a constantly unfolding spiral that seeks to achieve a communicative distance of equality between cultures.

In this approach, the emphasis is on respect for cultures, a positive evaluation of cultural differences that justified the inadmissibility of rigid cultural differentiation on the basis of any sign, because the existence of cultural differences depend only on the degree of manifestation of one or another cultural properties. The systematic approach allows us to see that different cultures interact with the world as more or less open or closed systems.

At present, all modern doctrines of education are directed to identity, to its protection and support. Humanism is one of the fundamental characteristics of social existence and consciousness, the essence of which is the attitude of a person to other people as the highest value. The definition of humanism as a set of views that express the dignity and value of a person, his right to free development reflects only one - the subjective side. The main thing concerns practical humanism - providing real, decent human material, technical, economic, political and cultural conditions for his life. Thus, the essence of humanism is reduced to a set of objective and subjective relations to each person as the highest independent value [1].

Pedagogical support and assistance in the context of the foundations of humanism should be aimed at the multidimensional nature of human self-development. An integrated approach is important here, which helps to solve such individual problems as maintaining health, success in learning and communication [2]. At the same time, education is undoubtedly one of the key areas for integrating the interests of society and the individual. The conditions for pedagogical support and protection of the individual in the context of the philosophy of humanism are: 1) attitude to a person as a value in itself; 2) the student's desire for self-organization, self-realization, self-giving as a mean and method of expressing oneself in a multicultural environment; 3) support for the active, creative nature of the students, the need for positive freedom, openness, and the ability to express themselves freely in a multicultural society [3].

2 METHODOLOGY

A set of complementary research methods was used to solve the tasks set and verify the initial provisions: theoretical analysis of historical and pedagogical teachings and psychology; study of the problem under study in philosophy, ethics, cultural studies, ethnology, ethnography, sociology, pedagogy, law; integrative and differentiated terminological analysis of the content and basic concepts

of the study; methods of comparative analysis of the theoretical array of ideas, concepts, hypotheses for the development of migrant pedagogy and multicultural education.

The specifics of multicultural education methods are determined by the dialogical nature of the functioning and development of culture, the level of ethno-cultural identification of the student, the level of knowledge of students about the multicultural environment, their emotional and behavioral culture, which requires the use of active methods: dialogue, conversation, discussion, modeling, design, reconstruction, role-playing games, reflexive methods. Multicultural education helps to reduce social tension in society, forms an individual who is ready for intercultural dialogue, expands opportunities for developing multicultural space and creates conditions for personal development. Multicultural education focuses on several pedagogical principles: development of human dignity and high moral qualities; education for carrying out activities with social groups of different races, religions, ethnic groups, etc.; development of tolerance and readiness for mutual cooperation [4].

The main function of multicultural education is to eliminate the contradiction between the systems and norms of education and training of dominant Nations, on the one hand, and ethnic minorities, on the other. The mutual adaptation of national groups and the rejection of cultural dictated by the ethnic majority are assumed. Other functions include the formation of ideas about the diversity of cultures and their interrelationships; promotion of self-realization and self-esteem of the individual; education of a positive attitude to cultural differences; development of interaction skills. The goals of multicultural education are both the acquisition of knowledge and appropriate education, which is part of pedagogical efforts that ensure social identification of the individual, open to other cultures, nationalities, races, and beliefs. There are three groups of pedagogical goals that can be defined by the concepts of pluralism, equality, and unification. In the first case, it is about respect and preservation of cultural diversity. The second is about supporting equal rights to education. The third group is about education in the spirit of national political, economic, and spiritual values [5].

In multicultural education, there is a constant formation of an individual who is ready for active creative activity in a modern multicultural and multinational environment, who preserves his socio-cultural identity, strives to understand other cultures, respects other cultural and ethnic communities, and knows how to live in peace and harmony with representatives of different nationalities, races, and beliefs. Achieving the goal is ensured by completing a set of tasks:

- Creating conditions for socio-cultural identification of the individual, which is a condition for entering a different socio-cultural community, taking into account the experience of mastering one's ethnic culture;

- Formation of ideas about the cultural and ethnic diversity of the world, the specifics of the multicultural environment, beliefs, ideals, life of various peoples, the importance of cultural diversity for the development of civilization;

- Formation of skills and abilities to live in peace and harmony with other peoples, to enter into a constructive dialogue of cultures;

- Development of skills critical to the development of a multicultural reality;

- Fostering tolerance and respect for the right of every people to preserve their cultural identity.

There are 5 approaches to multicultural education:

1 The cultural differences approach is an attempt to teach students of ethnic minorities by comparing cultures.

2 The human relations approach - learning by comparing social and cultural differences.

3 The approach that concerns learning in a separate group

4 The approach of multicultural education (personal-activity) - transformation of the educational process to reflect the ideal of democracy in a pluralistic society.

5 Socio-reconstructive approach, explaining the causes of pressure and racial discrimination.

Pedagogical activity at the University, based on a personal-activity approach to improvement students' multicultural literacy, involves the development of reflection, tolerance, the ability to intercultural dialogue, understanding of universal values and the uniqueness of different cultures (Russian, European, American, Eastern, etc.). This approach in teaching allows us to identify the inner side of the relationship between a person and a multicultural environment, reflecting the diversity of spiritual

and material forms of coexistence and interaction of heterogeneous, equal and equivalent cultures and their representatives [6].

The highest value of a multicultural educational space is a person, a student's personality, and the main meaning and purpose of education are related to its development, social and pedagogical protection, and support for individuality. Under these conditions, a person finds himself at the border of cultures, and he faces two most important personally significant problems of preserving his cultural identity and adapting to a multicultural environment. The goal of multicultural education is to form a person of culture, a creative person capable of active life in a multinational environment, with a developed sense of understanding and respect for other cultures, and the ability to live in peace and harmony with people of different nationalities, races, and beliefs [7].

The objectives of multicultural education are: 1) students' deep and comprehensive mastery of the culture of their own people, which is a prerequisite for integration into other cultures; 2) forming students' ideas about the diversity of cultures, fostering a positive attitude to cultural differences that ensure the progress of humanity and conditions for self-realization of the individual; 3) creating prerequisites for the integration of students into the cultures of other peoples; 4) developing skills and productive interaction with native speakers of other cultures; education of students in the spirit of peace, tolerance, humane interethnic communication.

The criteria for the content of multicultural education are as follows:

- Reflection of humanistic ideas, ideas of freedom and non-violence in the educational material;
- Characteristics of unique ethnic and original national features in the cultures of the world's peoples;
- Disclosure of common elements of traditions in the cultures of different peoples that allow us to live in peace, harmony, tolerance, and harmony;
- Introducing students to world culture, revealing the process of globalization, the interdependence of countries and peoples in modern conditions;
- Humanism, which expresses unconditional faith in the good principles inherent in the person;
- Democracy based on the recognition of equal rights and obligations and the provision of freedom of life in the social environment;
- Tolerance, tolerance to different views, customs, habits, and peculiarities of different peoples;
- Competence, i.e. the need to develop special abilities of teachers and students to master the knowledge of intellectual personality education;
- The basis of the content of multicultural education, which is intended to be a value-cultural, personality-oriented approach.

Multicultural educational space in its essence addresses human nature, democratic values and priorities of society. It is intended to lead to a dialogue of cultures based on harmony, integration and human unity. The real conditions for the development of the world of multicultural education are:

- The presence of a multicultural environment, which implies the wide use of a variety of cultural values, when the principle of national and cultural conformity is applied, which allows creating conditions for the formation of students' cultural identity;
- Creating a new, humane, diverse cultural environment for personal development;
- Formation of a planetary worldview and globalism;
- Development of universal values, national and ethnic cultures using modern technologies of intercultural interaction.

It is thanks to the new research of pedagogical science that traditions and technologies of multicultural educational area are created and accumulated, which can lead society and education forward. Trends in the development of modern education are based on its fundamental nature and continuity throughout the life of an individual. As a result, a person is introduced to the achievements of world culture, mastering the spiritual values of modern society. At the same time, the importance of multicultural educational space as a factor in the formation of the spiritual and moral potential of the individual is updated. The functions of a multicultural educational area that ensure the development, upbringing and education of students are:

1   Humanitarian and educational activities

2   Social adaptation

3   Cultural

4   Educational and developmental

5   Communication and integration

University graduates are aware of the importance of cultural differences that contribute to the mutual enrichment of values and experience of interaction, they perceive them positively, treat the culture of their people and other cultures equally, and they are less likely to oppose them to each other. Studying the problem of forming students' readiness to communicate in a multicultural environment makes a certain contribution to the possibility of educating a young person focused on understanding, tolerance, acceptance and respect for cultural diversity.

Today, there is a social need to organize purposeful work on the formation of a multicultural personality that combines systemic knowledge in the field of ethno-culture, a harmonious national identity, orientation to spiritual values, tolerance and the ability to interethnic dialogue. This is a kind of social order of the era, which urgently requires the younger generation to master universal values, introduce them to the culture of other peoples, preserve centuries-old traditions, and create the necessary conditions for their further development [8].

The content and technologies of higher education are the pedagogical basis of multicultural training. Consequently, the fundamental factor of multicultural training of a specialist is the educational process, since it is the controlled process that creates conditions for high-quality teacher training, provides regulation of human behavior, his relations with other people, including other ethnic cultures. Research work and the organization of industrial practice are also of great importance. Pedagogical conditions include the multicultural orientation of the educational process at the University to the systematic and gradual accumulation of students' knowledge in the field of multiculturalism and multicultural education; mastering the skills of organizing the educational process in a multicultural environment, its reflection, the need for self-education and self-development in the field of multicultural education.

Professional pedagogical culture of the teacher assumes a combination of high professionalism, intelligence and social maturity [9]. In addition, it should be noted a number of personal qualities of a teacher that are necessary for working in a multicultural educational environment:

1   Tolerance, communication skills, ability to extinguish negative emotions, suppress aggression, irritation.

2   Ability to resolve personal and public disputes with students through dialogue.

Taking into account all of the above, the requirements for professional training of students focused on working in a multicultural team were defined in our research:

- Mastering several languages and knowledge in the field of various theories of multicultural education, understanding the socio-psychological characteristics of other cultures;

- Use of modern educational technologies;

- Creating a positive cross-cultural interaction in the team.

Teachers, when preparing students for professional activities in a multicultural environment, should avoid threats and censures, instilling a sense of security and trusting relationships, and should involve other students in cross-cultural communication. In this regard, the teacher can rely on the richness of culture and language, which will help in the approval of students' knowledge. The teacher's integration of educational material with a cultural component allows developing a sense of pride in their culture for all students in a multicultural educational environment, respect for other peoples, and facilitates the process of learning the material. Based on the material read, the teacher introduces a conversation, discussion, and then can invite students to write an essay highlighting the similarities and differences between the characters and their own lives [10].

A successful condition for multicultural integration of educational material is the design of cross-cultural integrated courses, taking into account the peculiarities of the mentality of students, the ability to communicate dialogically, the teacher's knowledge of the tasks and basic ideas of multicultural education. Students have culturological and ethnopsychological knowledge that allows them to

understand the diversity of the modern world and provide an understanding of the importance of cultural pluralism for the individual and society. The ability of students to identify or contribute to the content of general education ideas that reflect the cultural diversity of the world, ethnic groups, to organize the pedagogical process, as a dialogue of carriers of different cultures in time and space helps the teacher to select educational content.

In our research we emphasized the following important criteria of the pedagogical approach in the development of integrated educational courses: humanistic orientation, personal and social responsibility, a sense of justice, respect for the dignity of another person, the ability to abandon existing stereotypes in teaching methods, the desire to create a situation of free choice, intercultural cooperation and pedagogical support. The teacher's familiarity with the ethno-cultural characteristics of students of different cultures allows creating favorable conditions for personalizing the training of all students, taking into account their level of education.

Thus, when developing educational programs, we propose to include certain disciplines that are actually focused on the acquisition of communicative competence with representatives of other cultural groups. For the development of multicultural competence in curricula of preparation of specialists in any field should be included such subjects or sections as: foreign languages, country study, world literature, history, peoples and cultures, ethics in intercultural interaction, basics of world religions, the fundamentals of the project activities in a multicultural professional environment, which, by means of its content and the use of modern pedagogical technologies, will allow to obtain theoretical knowledge, application-oriented knowledge and skills, that are necessary for working in a multicultural environment, as well as help students to organize motivational and psychological components of cross-cultural interaction.

3 RESULTS

Thus, in our study, we have revealed the facts that the content of multicultural education is aimed at: 1) creating conditions for socio-cultural identification of a personality, that defines its status when participating in intercultural dialogue and provides a primary experience of studying culture; 2) the formation of ideas about cultural and ethnic diversity of the world as in space and in time; 3) education of tolerance and respect for the right of every people to preserve their cultural identity; 4) equiping students with a conceptual apparatus that provides the most complete description of the multicultural environment; 5) teaching students technologies for reconstructing the values of cultural communities participating in the dialogue, which is the first step to understanding the motives, attitudes and biases of participants in the dialogue of cultures; 6) development students' abilities to critically master the multicultural reality.

According to the aim of our special pedagogical research we managed to develop educational programs that took into account the students' need to develop basic knowledge about the multicultural environment, mores, rules of behaviour in modern multicultural society, respect for the diversity of modern cultures and their representatives, and tactful behaviour skills.

Our research shows that most students have difficulty communicating between different cultures. Thus, when developing educational programs, we propose to include certain subjects that are actually focused on the acquisition of communicative competence with representatives of other cultural groups.

As a result, the pedagogical conditions for organizing students' education in a multicultural environment were identified, the main directions of training students for effective intercultural interaction were emphasized, and disciplines or their sections were proposed, that are included in the educational program and increase the level of development of students' intercultural competence.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Multicultural education is designed to support the diversity of large and small nations in the globalized world of today. It is a means of preserving and developing ethnic cultures, including their values in the practice of education and training, and thus solving actual problems of pedagogy. Over the past two decades, world pedagogical thought has been developing a general strategy for multicultural education and upbringing. Scientists identify multicultural education with the formation of a personality, capable of active and effective life in a multi-ethnic and multicultural environment, with a developed sense of understanding and respect for other cultures, and the ability to live in peace and harmony with people of different nationalities, races, and faiths.

Multicultural education is based on the formation of four basic competencies:

- Social competence: the ability to take responsibility, participate in group decision-making, tolerance, the ability to resolve conflicts non-violently, to participate in the development of democratic foundations of life;

- Communication competence related to the mastery of oral and written communication, which is especially important for work and social life;

- Information competence associated with possession of information technologies, mass media and advertising;

- Educational competence, the ability to learn during the life as the basis of continuous learning in the context of both personal professional and social life.

Multicultural education is defined by scientists as education that creates equal opportunities for all ethnic groups to realize their cultural needs, and introduces young people to the cultural and moral values of other countries and peoples. It is in multicultural education that the principle of dialogue and interaction of cultures is fully implemented. Professional training of a future multicultural specialist at a University, working or studying in a multicultural environment, should be implemented in four main blocks:

1　Psychological and ethical training

2　Special language training

3　Cultural training

4　Professional training

A multicultural specialist is a specialist who recognizes and actively promotes cultural pluralism and strives to protect national and cultural diversity. A multicultural teacher actively implements the goals and objectives of multicultural education, contributes to the formation of a multicultural personality of students.

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