

The multicultural education of information age: development trends and approaches to research

La educación multicultural de la era de la información: tendencias de desarrollo y enfoques de la investigación

Tatiana SHAPOSHNIKOVA [1](#); Tatyana KOSTYUKOVA [2](#); Oksana DOLGAYA [3](#); Svetlana MARCHUKOVA [4](#)

Recibido: 26/10/2017 • Aprobado: 25/11/2017

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ABSTRACT:

The article refers to the topical issues of multicultural education in the information age, the socialization of modern youth, the development of the ability in young people to live in space of different cultures, their unity, interrelation and harmony in its representatives. The main goal of the study is to analyze the current state of the issue of multicultural education in the world and Russian pedagogical theory, to identify the main approaches within which the ideas, concepts and theories of multicultural education have been developed. The methodology is based on philosophical, cultural, ethnological, sociological, historical, pedagogical theories, concepts and ideas: the development of ethnic groups and their cultures, cultures, intercultural contacts in the life of mankind. The results of the study contribute to an understanding of the multicultural education foundations, the search for the ways of developing in modern youth a sense of culture and cultural diversity and cultural values, a positive attitude to the national culture, innovative means and forms of encouraging respectful and tolerant

RESUMEN:

El artículo se refiere a cuestiones de actualidad de la educación multicultural en la era de la información, la socialización de la juventud moderna, el desarrollo de la capacidad de los jóvenes para vivir en el espacio de las diferentes culturas, su unidad, interrelación y armonía en su representantes. El objetivo principal del estudio es analizar el estado actual del tema de la educación multicultural en el mundo y la teoría pedagógica rusa, para identificar los enfoques principales dentro de los cuales se han realizado las ideas, conceptos y teorías de la educación multicultural desarrollado. La metodología se basa en teorías filosóficas, culturales, etnológicos, sociológicas, históricas, pedagógicas, conceptos e ideas: el desarrollo de grupos étnicos y sus culturas, culturas, contactos interculturales en la vida humana. Los resultados del estudio contribuyen a comprender los fundamentos de la educación multicultural, la búsqueda de las formas de desarrollar en la juventud moderna un sentido de cultura y diversidad cultural y valores culturales, una actitud positiva hacia la cultura nacional, medios innovadores y formas de fomentar la actitud

attitude to cultural differences.

Keywords: multicultural education, concepts, approaches, social trust and harmony, intercultural communication

respetuosa y tolerante con las diferencias culturales.

Palabras clave: Educación multicultural, conceptos, enfoques, confianza social y armonía, comunicación intercultural

1. Introduction

The relevance of the multicultural education issue is caused by the changes taking place in the life of the modern world in almost all spheres of the social life of mankind - demographic, economic, political, cultural, educational, spiritual, etc. The processes that form the grounds for globalization unite people in the economic sphere, contribute to the acceleration of scientific and technological progress, destroy the historical barriers between people. At the same time they may threaten to erase the ethnic and cultural identity of people, which causes their resistance, the desire to protect and preserve the uniqueness of their native culture. Russia is a multinational state and one of the urgent problems facing the Russian school today is the issue of developing in pupils the ability to live in a rapidly changing world, to respect the representatives of various national, ethnic, cultural and confessional communities. The goal of multicultural education, in the most generalized form, can be stated as the encouraging such personal quality in modern young people as "the art of living with other people" (A.G. Asmolov 2001, p. 4) as the development of the desire in them to seek social trust and harmony in society, to be able to accept and respect cultural differences, the willingness to be engaged in constructive dialogue with others, the ability to establish conflict-free relationships. The issue of multicultural education acquires particular relevance and complexity in the multiethnic and multinational Russian society (Humanistic values of education and upbringing, 2003). It contributes to the decrease of social tension in society, forms a person willing to intercultural dialogue, promotes opportunities for creation a multicultural space and provides conditions for the personal development. Today, the sociocultural situation in the world and in the Russian Federation can be characterized by the diversity of peoples and their cultures. People of today's reality and especially of the future will be forced to live together in a multinational and multicultural environment (Auernheimer 1996). At the same time, it should not be forgotten that traditionally any man is a bearer of ideals, values, beliefs, behavior standards of his own nation, and more often he or she is not well prepared for understanding and respecting foreign cultures. These reasons are the basis for the increase of rejection, enmity, violence, conflicts, often blocking the processes of personal self-identification and self-realization, but causing instability both in some countries and in the world as a whole. The most important tasks of multicultural education and a modern school are to prepare the younger generation for life in a multicultural space, teach them to trust each other and strive to live in peace and harmony. Thus, according to experts, multicultural education is a part of integrative content of general education. Its aim is forming of individuals who would be willing to active creative work in developing multicultural and multinational environment, while preserving their social and cultural identity, seeking to accept other cultures, respecting other cultural and ethnic groups, religions and nationalities, who are able to live in peace and harmony with people of different nationalities, races, religious faiths (Gridin, 2014; Suprunova 2011a; Suprunova 2013; Suprunova 2011b; Suprunova 2012; Cohen, 1988; Ershov 2009).

2. Methodology and research methods

The significance of the multicultural education tasks implementation in the Russian Federation has been stipulated in state documents and federal normative and legal acts, namely: in the Federal Target Program "Strengthening the Unity of the Russian Nation and the Ethnic and Cultural Development of the Peoples of Russia (2014-2020)"; Federal Law 4 "On Education in the Russian Federation" (2012); Concepts of Spiritual and Moral Development and Education of the Personality of a Russian Citizen (2009); Concepts of the National Educational Policy of the Russian Federation (2006). The multicultural orientation of the general education content has

been reflected in federal state educational standards.

The notion of multicultural education was introduced in the world pedagogy in the early 1970-s. A historical review of the issue makes it possible to single out, first and foremost, the context of the dialogue approach within which multicultural education is perceived in Russian pedagogy as a modern trend in the world process. It develops within the international and interethnic cooperation and focuses on the idea of a multiple "independent separate entities" underlying the world civilization. The national school has extensive experience in international education, ethno-pedagogy, the study of traditions, culture, ethics of peoples (S.G. Aivazova, A.K. Baburina, L.Y. Bondarenko, G.N. Volkov, L.M. Drobizheva, I.S. Kon, M.N. Kuzmin, D.S. Likhachev, K.M. Martynenko, V.A. Tishkov, V.K. Shapovalov, and others), in interethnic communication (G.Kh. Gasanov, A.F. Dashdamirov, V.G. Krysko, et al.). Speaking about multicultural education, Russian researchers A.V. Shafrikova, T.B. Menskaya, G.D. Dmitriev, L.G. Vedenina, et al. state that its distinctive feature is the possibility of preserving the diversity of cultural values, norms, their dialogue and interaction. Education as a part of culture is designed to promote the interrelations of different cultural environments (SHafrikova 1998; Menskaya 1993; Pommerin, n. d.; Schmidt 1987; Dmitriev 1999; Vedenina, 1993). According to A.V. Shafricova, multicultural education means "different for different people in society; but at a deeper level is due to economic realities and the ideology of different societies" (SHafrikova 1998, p.15).

3. Results

The foreign languages teaching is an important component of multicultural education. Thus, L.G. Vedenina, using the concept of "intercultural learning", makes the link to intercultural education and defines it as "a polylogue of languages and cultures, training intended to integrate the learner into the system of the world culture" (Vedenina 1993, p.15). From a perspective of the acculturation approach to polycultural education, many researchers refer it to multicultural education or polyethnic one, designed to try to normalize relations between ethnicities and ethnic groups and individuals. Another author views the multicultural education not only as "a way to resist racism, prejudice, bias, ethnocentrism, hatred based on cultural differences", but also "a pedagogical attempt to help in realizing our culture, the role of generalizations and stereotypes in communication between different cultures, and ourselves" (Dmitriev 1999, p. 7).

In Western countries, there was a marked increase in the studies in the field of multicultural education in the 1980s and 1990s. A certain contribution to it was made by D. Banks, S. Banks, D. Gollnik, R. Garcia, C. Irwin, V. Mitter, T. Rülker, D. Hope, and others. Multicultural education is also perceived as education in the spirit of peace, as an effective way to settle intercultural conflicts (Hohmann 1983, p.23).

Foreign scientists dealing with the issues of multicultural education (Homann, Zandfuks, Zimmer) state that today the goals and objectives of multicultural education are significantly expanded and cover intercultural relations not only in the space of one country, but also in the entire world space. Multicultural education aims at people socialization and adaptation; altogether, it should prepare a growing generation for life in a changing world, where life is determined by ethnic, linguistic, religious and social features and differences (Hohmann 1983; Kruger-Potratz 1994).

Scientists identify the main areas of multicultural education in modern society, such as: the joint settling of intercultural conflicts, intercultural dialogue and interaction of cultures, their mutual enrichment through borrowing, turning of a person to the knowledge of its culture (Hohmann 1983; Kruger-Potratz 1994). "Multicultural education takes place when a certain person seeks in communication with people of another culture to understand their specific system of perception, cognition, thinking, their system of values and deeds, integrates new experience into his own cultural system and change in accordance with another's culture. Along with the knowledge of foreign culture multicultural education encourages the analysis of the

system of culture as well" (Thomas, 1988, p.83).

A multi-perspective educational theory which provides for changes in the educational programs of schools and universities that will serve to overcome monocultural orientations, has been reviewed in the context of multicultural education (H. Goepfert, W. Schmidt) from the perspective of a dialogue approach. The authors write that it is important both to represent other cultures in courses and programs, and to make best efforts to ensure the implementation of the ideas of a dialogue of cultures in schools. Goepfert has singled out the criteria under which such programs and training courses can be developed in which a "double vision" ("doppelte Sichtweise") will be present: "Other peoples and cultures should be viewed not as objects, but as historical subjects. It is necessary to show representatives of other cultures in their life situation, along with their lifestyle, traditions, habits and life circumstances" (Goepfert 1985, p. 34)

Programs and courses can contribute to the extension of the students' understanding of the world, critical thinking development, bringing different points of view on events and different worldview positions. Thus, according to Schmidt, multicultural education should necessarily take into account the cultural, political and social analysis of the situation. In the "Intercultural Learning" ("Interkulturelles Lernen") educational program developed by him, three main training blocks have been involved: "Ethnocentrism issue", "Life in the surrounding world", "Crisis of industrial society", in which intercultural communications are of major priority. They are still universal. He says: "Intercultural communication includes richness and diversity of thinking and contributes to the overall development of the personality thanks to elements present in foreign cultures" (Schmitt, 1979, p.116-117). The prospects for the development of the world community are based, according to the scientist, on the awareness by each nation, ethnic group and nationality of its crisis situations and the opportunities of overcoming them. The scientist sees these opportunities in the development of a peace-loving society, which can be built "only at the level of personal contacts with representatives of other cultures, at the level of integration and transformation of knowledge obtained from other cultures" (Schmitt 1979, p.134). Then the main task of multicultural education is developing capacities for intercultural communication (Schmitt 1979, p.137).

4. Discussion

The analysis of contemporary discussions on multicultural education allows stating that currently, the concepts and ideas of the socio-psychological approach have not been fully formed in the pedagogical perception yet; however, they dominate in this discourse. Their distinguishing features are the following: a view of multicultural education as a special way of forming certain "socio-attitudinal and value driven predispositions, communicative and empathic skills" (Cole 1986; Essed and Mullard 1991), on the basis of which it is possible to build intensive intercultural interaction, to understand other cultures, respect for their bearers. The most important of them are intercultural competences, i.e. the ability to actively interact with representatives of different cultures; this, according to scientists, is the competence of anti-racist education and social learning (Carrington, Cole, Troun, Mullard).

The competence of anti-racism education was discussed in the UK in the early 80's in the works of Mullard (Essed and Mullard 1991). According to such scholars as Mullard, Carrington, Cole, Troun, anti-racist education is not part of a multicultural education, but an alternative to it. The difference is that they are grounded on completely different strategies of educational policy (Cole 1986, p.123). Pedagogical models of multicultural education are fundamentally culture-oriented, and the concept of anti-racism education takes into account the structure of society (Essed and Mullard 1991, p. 61). "Unlike the models of multicultural education that are aimed at fostering respect for cultural differences, the concept of anti-racism education implies the formation of an active attitude in relation to inequality and injustice" (Essed and Mullard 1991, p. 84). Thus, the opponents of multicultural education criticize it for its apolitical and culturological interpretation of all problems. For the sake of justice, it should be noted that

today there is a tendency to bring together two previously completely irreconcilable positions. This pedagogical discussion was held in recent years in Germany and other European countries on the prospects and strategies for the education systems development in the context of multiculturalism, opposed to manifestations of extremism and terrorism. According to Lee, anti-racism education can become a part of a multicultural education, if it takes into account the current political factors (Lee 1992).

Cohen (1988) also speaks of a real unification of the two positions, he tries to emphasize the positive aspects of both concepts and overcome the shortcomings of the both approaches. The goal of multicultural education according to him is to develop critical thinking among the youth and schoolchildren and foster respect for other people and cultures (Cohen 1988, p.97).

Within the framework of the socio-psychological approach, the theory of "cultural differences" is being developed today. Its supporters distinguish the following objectives of multicultural education: development of tolerance for someone else's lifestyle and style of behavior (Cohen 1988, p.97).

Awareness of the fact that cultural differences affect the emotional state of a person and can become the reasons for its experiences and behavior:

- Knowing and developing the ability to evaluate the systems of value and norms of other cultures (Bourdieu 1982; Gaitanides 1994).
 - Forming the ability to integrate elements of other cultures into one's own system of thinking and values (Memmi 1987).
 - Knowing and development of the ability to evaluate the value systems and norms of other cultures (Hackl 1993).
 - Forming the ability to integrate elements of other cultures into one's own system of thinking and values (Gaitanides 1994).
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5. Conclusion

The analysis of the scientific literature on the issue of multicultural education carried out in the study provides grounds for alleging that currently the leading socio-psychological approach is reflected in German social education. The main objectives of multicultural education according to the authors of the theory of social learning are the formation in the students of empathy, solidarity, orientation to conflict-free settlement of issues and the ability to resolve conflicts. According to Essinger and Graf, "empathy implies an understanding of another person, the ability to put oneself in its place, to see his (her) problems with his (her) own eyes and at the same time to feel sympathy for him (her). Fostering empathy requires, first of all, stimulating the openness of individuals, their readiness to deal with other people, their problems and recognize their otherness" (Essinger and Graf 1984, p. 26). These studies are interdisciplinary in their nature; rely on the research results of sociologists, culturologists, psychologists and physiologists on studying the processes of changing children's worldview. Schmitt is one of the few authors, who take into account the psychological emphases of multicultural education. He is an advocate of innovative teaching methods used in multicultural education, such as role play and projects. They teach pupils to overcome the discrepancy between conscious and cognitively assumed knowledge and spontaneous emotional reactions. The merit of the scientist is also that he formulated the basic principles of social education and training in the framework of multicultural education: the principle of "avoidance of normative differences" and the principle of "social affinity" (Schmitt 1979, p. 77). Their provisions state that it is important to be cautious with the otherness and alienation of another culture and its representatives and it is advisable to discuss actual, real issues and situations so that they can be more easily correlated with one's own experience (Schmitt 1979).

According to the Russian researchers, multicultural education in its content should focus on:

- creating conditions for the socio-cultural identification of the individual, determining its status

with participation in intercultural dialogue and providing it with a primary experience of studying culture;

- forming awareness of the cultural and ethnic diversity of the world both in space and in time;
- fostering tolerance and respect for the right of each nation to preserve their cultural identity (Zapesockij 2002, p. 142–154);
- multicultural education requires the appropriate training of teachers as well, the development of their abilities for the critical absorbing a multicultural reality, equipping them with a conceptual apparatus, enabling them to fully understand various, including behavioral manifestations in a multicultural environment; innovative technology learning, for example, reconstruction of the values of cultural communities that can take part in the dialogue, the means of understanding and explaining the reasons, attitudes and prejudices of possible participants in the dialogue of cultures (Ershov, 2000, p. 6; Zapesockij 2002, p. 8–12).

The above analysis of the process of multicultural education development, the formulation of its goals and objectives shows that they become more complicated: from a dialogue of cultures, an insight into other culture, fostering respect for it, to the analysis of one's own system of values and the search for universal norms of behavior. Approaches to multicultural education complement each other, and the goals and objectives of different theories and concepts can be considered as the directions for the implementation of multicultural education for students. An analysis of the historical experience of the multicultural education development, performed by the presented study, confirms the findings of Russian scholars that the mechanisms for changing the education content depend on and are conditioned by concrete historical situations in the society development. That is, education can be considered as a kind of a model of the respective culture, which absorbs a multitude of different layers. One can also agree with the findings of scientists that the current stage of culture development does not have an adequate system of education, which causes intensive searches for the optimal education model.

Acknowledgement

The research was carried out with the financial support of the Russian Humanitarian Scientific Foundation (project *No. 16-06-00282 - a*).

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Makarenko, 5/16; E-mail: cpc@instrao.ru

2. National Research Tomsk State University, 634050, Russia, Tomsk, Lenin Avenue, 36

3. Institute for Strategy of Education Development of the Russian Academy of Education, 105062, Russia, Moscow, ul. Makarenko, 5/16

4. German classical school "Peterschule", 195213, Russia, St Petersburg, Zanevsky prospect, 53/2, E-mail: marchukova@bk.ru

Revista ESPACIOS. ISSN 0798 1015

Vol. 38 (Nº 56) Year 2017

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