

Technologies For Improving Teacher's Cross-Cultural Literacy



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Abstract: *The general trends of modern education include the desire to integrate and universalize social relations. The process leads to the intensity of intercultural interaction between representatives of different cultural communities. In modern Russia, intercultural contacts are expanding; this aspect emphasizes the importance of achieving mutual understanding among people of different cultures. Education is not able to overcome the problems confronting society but it can make a significant contribution to the harmonization of a multicultural society. Education develops and modernizes technologies and forms of evolution and socialization of the process of students' intercultural relations. Education can also affect the development of tolerance of students involved in the educational process and respect for the cultural diversity of society. It can help a person understand his own culture and the culture of other nations, to acquire the skills of an adequate assessment and understanding of both individuals and cultural diversity in general. Being the most important part of a culture, education is designed to ensure the entry of a person into a culture through the introduction of an individual to the national values of his people. Similar to culture, education cannot be limited by the framework of native cultural values; it should create conditions not only for enriching a person with human values but also for understanding the significance of this diversity.*

Multiculture-focused education should become an inseparable part of general education, since with the multinational population, the saturation of interpersonal relations takes place in a multiethnic, multicultural environment. Provided that a person learns, works, rests in the conditions of a multicultural-focused environment, the need for communication with representatives of different cultural communities is formed, and, as a result, the cross-cultural literacy of an individual is raised.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Intercultural dialogue is a unique and controversial process. There is much evidence that society is experiencing significant difficulties in the implementation of a focused, constructive integration policy. The problems stem from the traditional model of world apprehension and building relationships, as the model is built on the principle of distrust of the "alien". The organization of open dialogue and cooperation among representatives of different ethnic cultures also causes difficulties. A multicultural reality is characterized by a dynamic change. The younger generation is not always ready for the processes of integration in such a reality. The social policy serves a prime example here. As a result, interethnic interactions come with an increase in social tensions, terrorist acts and other facts of interethnic confrontation. The organization of intercultural dialogue is a unique and controversial process. Therefore, the dialogue is interesting and challenging.

It should be emphasized that the growth rate of cultural and ethnic diversity in recent decades has increased considerably. On the one hand, this process may be accounted for the influx of migrants from countries of the former Soviet Union, on the other hand, it is predetermined by the information field, which is saturated with manifestations of various ethnic cultures. However, the rise of multiculturalism level coupled with the lack of focused national policy targeting the ensuring of the integration processes among nations, becomes a factor in the development of social risks and the destruction of social structures.

Cross-cultural teacher literacy is actualized among many problems that arise when studying this socio-pedagogical phenomenon. In order to further deepen the academic understanding of these scientific studies, it is necessary to investigate the problems associated with determining the content of the teacher's cross-cultural literacy. Of much importance are the problems connected with the formation of a teacher's reflection skill and with the development of similar skill in schoolchildren. The experience of educational organizations suggests that teachers are not fully aware of the need for students to develop an understanding of not only their own culture but also someone else's culture.

Pedagogical science is looking for ways that will help form and develop cross-cultural literacy of a teacher.

Such a teacher will be able to understand, comprehend, and perceive the values of different cultures and involve students in their own and foreign culture. These ideas in teaching practice are not always successfully implemented. The reason lies in the fact that the teacher is not always able to carry out purposeful work on introducing students to the values of other cultures, and is not always aware of this as a problem. In pedagogical practice, the source of these problems is the contradiction between the recognition by teachers of the importance of developing students' tolerance, and the ability to understand different cultural norms and values. Alternatively, the problems are determined by the development of crisis tendencies in modern society, i.e. ethnic conflicts, intolerance, prejudice, cultural stereotypes and etc. These tendencies make impact on both teachers and students. At the present stage of development of society, multicultural literacy is a complex education, including the knowledge and understanding of another language, respect for foreign customs and traditions. The upbringing and formation of a culture during interethnic interaction are based on the willingness and ability of young people to communicate with people of other cultures. The skills and abilities to apply tact and flexibility in situations of interethnic interaction contribute to the conflict-free interaction of actors.

The culture of any country absorbs the best examples of what is inherent in the cultures of other nations.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Besides the types of literacy caused by technical progress, of much importance are the terms which are associated with the human ability to be and act in the context of culture. The degree of involvement in a particular cultural background knowledge determines cultural literacy, which is related to the ability to understand the informal context, allusions, and idioms that represent and create a certain dominant culture. The informal level does not only mean the acquaintance with a wide range of basic knowledge which constitutes the core of a particular culture. It also claims the freedom to apply this knowledge in the process of creating a language of collective knowledge and social communication. This interpretation of the concept implies specific social, cultural and national experience. In the second half of the 1980s, this understanding of cultural literacy was introduced into the scientific use by the American culture scientist E.D. Hirsh who was the author of the "New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy". The dictionary has gone through several reeditions [1]. This topic is also relevant to Russia. Recently, in Russia, there have been repeated attempts at methodological verification of cultural literacy with the help of test questions and the compilation of special dictionaries. According to such dictionaries, the derivatives of "cultural literacy" are as follows:

- literacy in the field of national (traditional) culture, the idea of which is associated with an increase in the level of knowledge of the population about traditions and customs, folk dances, music, and poetry;

- multicultural-oriented literacy, which represents the ability to freely navigate the multicultural world, understanding its meanings and values, as well as embodying them in notable examples of civilized behavior when interacting with representatives of different nations and countries, and their cultures [2]. According to H.-G. Gadamer, education consists in the fact that an individual, rising from his natural essence into the sphere of the spirit, finds a given substance that he wants to master. This substance stems from the customs, language, and social structure of his own people. The world into which the man grows is formed by human language and customs. In this world of their own, a given nation finds its being. The essence of education thus constitutes a return to oneself through alienation [3].

At about the same time, in the first half of the 19th century, the word "culture" also entered Russia through the French language. Many Russian thinkers considered culture in line with the approval of its unity with values. Russian philosophers followed the ideas of I. Kant who noted that culture itself consisted of social values of a human being. They also appreciated the ideas of G. Rickert who understood under the culture a set of objects related to the values that were important and nourished for the sake of these values. Consequently, S.L. Frank defined culture as an aggregate of objective values actualized in sociohistorical life [4], and N.A. Berdyaev characterized the culture right through the concept of value, stressing that culture was the realization of new values [5]. According to G.G. Shpet, considering culture as a set of values, nature acquires any meaning, including aesthetic, like everything else, only in the context of culture [6]. Another Russian thinker L.P. Karsavin wrote that culture was not a simple sum of values and not even a system of them, but their organic unity, always assuming the existence of a certain subject who created them, stored and developed, who himself was developing in them, and only in them [7]. In general, the philosophers of the 19th century were characterized by an awareness of reality as two-fold, including nature and culture, which was understood as "the world of man", as a "kingdom of spirit", as a combination of various forms of consciousness — moral, religious, and others. It is possible to agree with M.S. Kagan who, analyzing cultural research of that time, noted that culture was considered not in its value, not as a complex system, but in specific manifestations, as a result of which the philosophy of culture was subdivided into private disciplines, i.e. ethics, the philosophy of religion, axiology, aesthetics, etc. [8].

Native scholars [9] - [11] note that there is a contradiction between the recognition of the importance of developing tolerance, the ability to understand cultural values and the preservation of cultural identity.

The participants of an educational process not always can overcome cultural stereotypes and equally positively relate both to their own culture and to the culture of another nation.

There is much evidence that for Russia which is a multinational and multiconfessional secular state, civil unity is of particular value and significance.

This is reflected in many federal programs and documents which are as follows: the federal target program “Strengthening the Unity of the Russian Nation and the Ethnocultural Development of the Peoples of Russia” (2014–2020), Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of June 1, 2012 No.

761 “On the National Action Strategy for Children for 2012-2017”, Strategies of the state national policy of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025, the National Doctrine of Education in the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025. These documents stress the extreme importance of the formation of civic identity, the patriotic education of citizens, the strengthening of the spiritual unity of the peoples of the Russian Federation.

Conceiving the importance of the multinationalism of the peoples of Russia, their active inclusion in the country’s economy, the education system is designed to take into account the real multinationalism of student groups, therefore ensuring mutual understanding of the cultural traditions of school groups.

The works of national scholars, i.e. K.D. Ushinskii A.S. Makarenko, V.A. Sukhomlinskii, and others describe the formation of national identity in various aspects. L.S. Vygotskii, S.L. Rubinstein substantiated the interrelation of activity and awareness, exploring the behavior of a person, and mutually conditioned the value system of a person and emotional and volitional development. Love for the neighbor and homeland, mercy, awareness of unity with other people are reflected in the works of M.M. Bakhtin, N.A. Berdyayev, S.K. Bondyrev, I.A. Ilin, Ya.A. Komenskii, D.S. Likhachev, V.A. Sukhomlinsky. The issues of identity emerge in the work of Ya. B. Amirova, Yu. G. Volkova, O.V. Gukalenko, V.V. Kochetkova, et al., Yu. N. Kulyutkin, V.I. Lyubimov, E.I. Ogarev, V.G. Onushkin described cross-cultural literacy as a type of functional literacy.

III. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

A. General description

The opportunity to consider the concepts of “cross-cultural literacy”, “intercultural education”, “intercultural teaching”, “intercultural and cross-cultural communication” emerges across various scientific and pedagogical approaches.

Within educational paradigms, the cross-cultural aspect mainly relates to the teaching of a foreign language. The aspect is developed on the basis of four culture-focused approaches: cultural linguistics targeting the introduction of students to the culture of the acquired language, country studies through language aimed at learning the language with positions of the national cultural heritage of its native speakers, communicative-ethnographic study, aimed at learning the language in real life circumstances, i.e. in the course of communication with native speakers, and socio-cultural studies, targeting the study of different types of cultures through the prism of communicative norms of interaction, the interpretation of phenomena and national cultural facts and the choice of interactive strategies in solving problems in the situations of intercultural communication.

These approaches are an important part of the learning process, however, not all of them are equally relevant and meaningful for the system of education now, since they do not reflect all the features of the interaction of the world community. However, for the world community the concept of a “dialogue of cultures” is a priority. Undoubtedly, none of the above approaches in education is applicable in pure form. The cross-cultural approach has taken the place of the described above approaches in recent years. This approach is not an absolutely new phenomenon in the methodological and educational practice and coexists in the framework of integration linguistic studies, cultural linguistic, sociocultural and communicative ethnographic approaches. Therefore, it is this approach that becomes an important component of the learning process nowadays.

Scientific and pedagogical literature made it possible to present the basics of pedagogical technology, based on the pedagogical principles, which laid the foundation for teaching cross-cultural literacy. It was also possible to define the concept of teaching cross-cultural literacy in the conditions of additional professional education (Fig. 1).

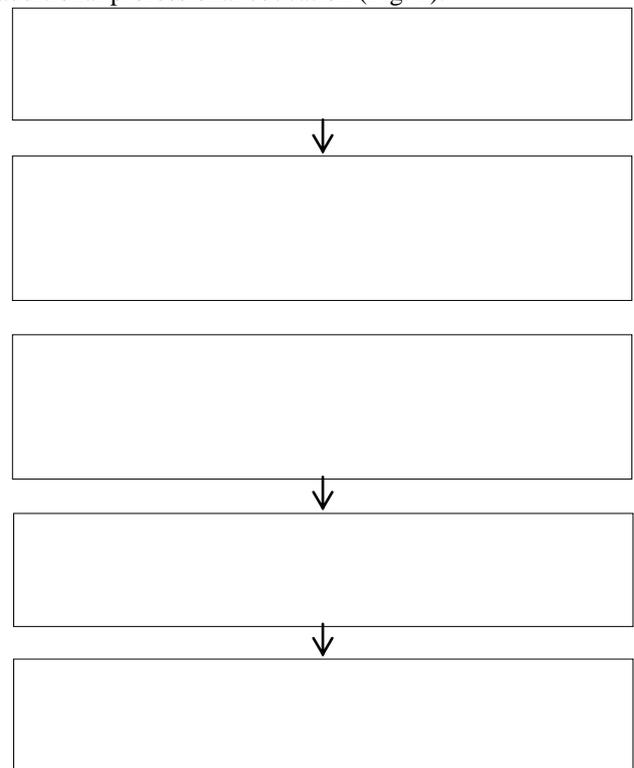


Fig. 1: Concept of teaching cross-cultural literacy in the conditions of additional professional education

B. Algorithm

The study showed that effective teaching of cross-cultural literacy is based on the pedagogical and methodological activities of the teacher actualized on the basis of the pedagogical technologies which are as follows:

- the coordination and integration of all components at the contextual and technological levels of the program to ensure the formation of cross-cultural literacy among the Further

Vocational Education students;

- the selection of cross-culturally filled educational material for the educational process;
- the use of foreign language press, the Internet resources, films in the original to activate extracurricular work;
- the comparative analysis of the moral and ethical aspects of cross-cultural literacy of an individual, ranging from the problems of the etiquette of cross-cultural communication to intercultural and inter-religious tolerance;
- psychological, pedagogical and methodological teachers' proficiencies related to the formation of cross-cultural literacy among the students of Further Vocational Education;
- teachers' mastering of pedagogical technology targeting the formation of cross-cultural literacy among the students of Further Vocational Education

IV. RESULT ANALYSIS

Proceeding from the analysis of multicultural society development in modern Russia, it was possible to formulate key sociocultural factors that influenced the development of teachers' cross-cultural literacy in Russia. They are as follows:

- the increasing pace of integration and differentiation in inter-ethnic relations which sometimes leads to the strengthening of nationalist sentiments;
- significant psychological and pedagogical potential of cross-cultural literacy in order not only to preserve the culture of own's own native people but also to form positive attitude towards the cultures of other nations;
- the general history of the formation and development of nations, which determines the attitude not only to the past but also to the long-term development of the state;
- a detrimental tendency in modern Russia according to which there is a decrease in trust among ethnic groups which results in the increase of negative attitudes, activation of xenophobia and aggressive behavior among ethnicities;
- a tendency to increase youth organizations united by nationalistic views.

The identified sociocultural conditions and factors of a multicultural society cannot claim to be complete but are significant for the formation and development of cross-cultural literacy as the basis of Russian identity in the modern multicultural educational space. Teachers are responsible for the implementation of cross-cultural literacy among students. The concept of "cross-cultural literacy of a teacher" is reflected in Table I.

Table – I: Cross-cultural literacy of a teacher

Cross-cultural literacy of a teacher	<i>Personality-psychological qualities</i> (openness, tolerance, positive attitude, motivation for interpersonal contact with people from other cultures, respect for other cultures, social sensitivity, resistance to stress, conflict tolerance, etc.)
	<i>Cognitive qualities</i> (linguistic knowledge, cultural and linguistic country studies, cultural and educational knowledge; the knowledge of the norms, values, and

	content of cultural differences in both native and other cultures)
	<i>Ethnic and social qualities</i> (sociability, ethnical ethics (the recognition and respect of traditions and customs of a different culture), ability to constructively solve ethnic and social problems, the possession of ethnic verbal and ethnic nonverbal culture)
	<i>Creative and pedagogical qualities</i> (creative potential, creative thinking, creative potential (justified readiness for adequate action), etc.

The cognitive qualities of the teacher are language skills, i.e. the knowledge of lexical, grammatical, phonetic and other norms of the language; cultural and linguistic country-study and behavioral components. The linguistic country-study and geographic component of the culture represents the spatial knowledge (geography, history, literature, etc.) of another country and the understanding of the facts that have affected the formation of the worldview of the bearers of a different culture; the knowledge of everyday realities; the knowing and understanding of social rituals; the exposure to values, moral and ethical guidelines relevant to this culture. Cultural and behavioral components are characterized by the awareness of speech etiquette; the knowledge of cultural and behavioral norms; the ability to adequately react to a verbal, nonverbal and ethical cultural context.

Personal and psychological qualities of a teacher are openness, tolerance, positive attitude, internal motivation for interpersonal contact with people from other cultures, respect for other cultures, socially sensitive (welcoming) communication, stress tolerance, conflict tolerance, etc.

As for teacher's creative and pedagogical qualities are concerned, here it is possible to define them as "the ability to abandon stereotypical ways of thinking" (P. Guilford). Of much importance is the ability to find effective, the most adequate ways to solve the tasks, to engage in creative activities, as well as the skill to concentrate to generate new ideas, showing justified readiness for adequate risk, creative potential, etc. Education is designed to ensure the entry of a person into a culture through the development of cultural values, carried out by education as transmission, the transmission of culture from generation to generation and the consolidation of historical cultural values in each subsequent generation. In addition, education, similar to culture, cannot be limited to the framework of cultural values of one nation but should address the enrichment of the "individual and social mental qualities" of a given society with universal human values, reflecting the objective integrity of human civilization and the natural tendencies to spiritual convergence and gradual integration of various societies, as well as an increasingly active dialogue of cultures. Accordingly, the content of education includes three interrelated blocks: the first block is responsible for providing the opportunity for a person to identify himself by belonging to a particular culture; the second block creates the conditions for an individual to enter an equal dialogue with the existing foreign cultural environments,



and the third block provides the opportunity for an individual to join modern global civilizational processes, to understand them better [12].

The field of education is precisely the field that can recreate the diversity of cultures, as well as contribute to the development of students in the direction of the culture-forming ability of reflection, i.e. assessing oneself, people and the world from the perspective of the subject of culture which acts as a prerequisite for the development of the ability to understand the value of one's own and other cultures. Currently, in addition to the need to improve the essence of the native culture, of much importance is the formation of cross-cultural literacy, which consists in the need and development of students' ability to understand a different culture.

V. CONCLUSION

Cross-cultural literacy is a necessary condition for communication in a multicultural society. Cross-cultural communication is based on individual elements, and cultural aspects affect all levels of communication: verbal, nonverbal, etiquette. The main function of communication in society is socialization, the purpose of which is the acquisition of cultural experience.

Secondly, pedagogical support implies the creation of organizational and content-rich conditions that allow subjects of the educational process to improve the skills of intercultural dialogue in a multicultural society.

Thirdly, through intercultural communication, the significance of creating conditions for social and political self-realization in the process of multicultural education is determined by attracting young people to participate in the activities of civil society institutions and socio-political actions. Fourthly, a multicultural society actively stimulates processes of ethnic identity which requires special attention to the formation of cross-cultural literacy.

Fifthly, in the conditions of creating the information society, the dynamic growth of needs in the period of large-scale socio-economic shifts and entry into the post-industrial era, further vocational education provides an opportunity to satisfy the demands of society.

Through social practice and pedagogical experience, the research confirmed the need to develop cross-cultural literacy as one of the most important resources for overcoming social risks that are associated with increased nationalist sentiment and national-cultural security.

Multicultural education targets creating pedagogical conditions for the purpose of positive cultural identification of students' personality. This process allows students to organically enter the multicultural space of the world and a country, perceive other cultural values positively and conduct a constructive dialogue with their bearers.

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