Methodological Principles of Polycultural Education

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Abstract

This article elaborates polycultural education approach. Three main approaches for understanding of polycultural education (acculturation, dialogue and social cum psychological) are considered and conceptions evolved within their framework. Attention is also paid to the foreign and domestic (Russian) researches in this area. In the end of the article the author handles the idea of "polycultural education". The article deals with the following: dialogue approach, which is based on the ideas of cultures dialogue, openness, cultural pluralism; activity-oriented conception of polycultural education, conception of multi-perspective education, conception of "cultural differences", and conception of social education.

Keywords: Methodological principles, Polycultural education, Dialogue approach, Activity-oriented conception, Conception of multi-perspective education.

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INTRODUCTION

The study of the problem of polycultural education in Russian and foreign pedagogics seems to be actual from the point of view of contemporary society demands. The present globalization process supposes the nations' rapprochement, reinforcement of their intercultural interaction. This fact in total influences positively to the social-cultural situation in the world, but simultaneously it poses a threat of peoples' cultural personality deletion, submissioning them to the strange standards what often leads to conflicts and wars.

Today for the Russian people arose a demand of perception themselves as a nation, as participants of the cultural dialogue, which is being held within the bound of Europe, where we are the equal representatives of the world culture being the bearers of the Russian culture. The modern reality puts ahead of education an intricate challenge of upbringing the young people in the spirit of peace and respect for all nations, shaping with the younger generation of the skills to communicate and cooperate with the people of different nationalities, confessions and social groups, to understand and appreciate the other cultures' uniqueness.

The contemporary education process inevitably proceeds in conditions of interaction between small and big ethnic groups, which simultaneously develop either nationwide culture and enrich other cultures (from small to dominant). With the present tendency, the necessary conditions of the peaceful and effective contact are: shaping of cultural values with all participants of cultural and ethnic dialogue, creation of the common national and cultural space, inside of which everybody can find and save his/her ethnic, language, cultural and social status.

In this respect the value priorities are changed, reorientation of the previous education model from monocultural to polycultural is going on, and at that the native culture acts as a core. Ahead of education comes up a task of shaping of personality, which could feel himself / herself comfortable in multicultural surrounding, could psychologically adjust to similar conditions and provide himself / herself normal activity and life in whole by the actions, saving the identity and mentality.

DISCUSSION

Elaboration of contemporary conceptions of polycultural education considers determination of methodological reasons of this occurrence. The process of polycultural education is stipulated on the one hand by contemporary historical and social-cultural conditions, on the other hand it reclines against a number of traditions of the native and foreign philosophy, pedagogics and psychology. Studying of a number of historical, social-cultural factors and philosophy-

pedagogical or psychological determinants enables us to emphasize the most popular in science methodological approaches for understanding of the essence of polycultural education: *acculturation, dialogue and social-psychological approach.*

Emergence of the "polycultural education" term is connected with the **acculturation approach**. In this approach, which is held to by most of the foreign researchers who decide that polycultural education should be oriented to the migrant culture, address themselves to the research of the native culture and its traditions transformation in the format of a new culture since the conflict in the course of collision with the non-permanent conditions of life stipulates the need for changing, shaping of new cultural guides (Aleksashenkova, 2005: 22-26).

Within the framework of the acculturation approach this view of the multicultural environment has become the foundation of the **multi-ethnic education conception**, the authors of which are W. Boss-Newning and W. Zandfuks. Multi-ethnic education, the idea of which progressed in 60s–70s of the XXth century, as the goal set shaping and evolution of harmonic relations between representatives of the different ethnic groups, which meant the upbringing of tolerance and mutual transparency (Gay, 1983: 560). The culture of migrants at this formulation of multi-ethnic education problems is subjected to serious study, but such factor as mutual cultural enrichment is of no attention.

Another conception which was developed within the framework of this approach is **the conception of bicultural education,** wide-spread in foreign pedagogics. The conception is based on the idea of creation of the double language personality, double culture. Its authors, in particular W. Ftenakis, believed that identity of foreign students should be formed of the language minority groups. Formation of "bilingual-bicultural" identity from the point of view of this conception followers would be possible only on conditions that the representatives of the ethnic and language minorities realize their cultural and linguistic heritage, on the ground of which they would be able to separate and comprehend critically the value orientations of two cultures, which are hourly compared, and also form and save their own cultural identity (Christian, 1996: 13-21).

It should be noted that in domestic researches the acculturation approach to polycultural education has not gained significant amplification considering that in our country the most priority factor is a purpose of reservation and enriching of the Russian culture, which is dominant in Russia, and national-cultural identity of the other nations, living in that area.

In the tideway of acculturation approach to polycultural education are represented the works of such native researchers like Kornusova (Cohen, 1988), who considers the students'

motivation development to study the native language by means of creation of poly-linguistic teaching system.

In connection with the development of communications and diffusion of cultures the great importance for scientists, dealing with the issues of polycultural education, is the dialogue approach which is based on ideas of dialogue between cultures, openness, and cultural pluralism. The substance of this approach is to consider the polycultural education as a way of introducing students to different cultures for the purpose of forming of the global consciousness, that allows you to cooperate closely with representatives of various countries and nations and to integrate into the global and Pan-European cultural and educational space.

Due to increasingly complicating communications people unite in a joint community. Under such conditions the scientists long ago realized that dialogue is the optimal educational polycultural strategy. So, S. L. Novolodskaya is convinced that contemporary education as an intention should have the formation of the "dialogical man", able to perceive the world in all its cultural diversity (Glossary of educational technologies, 2006: 230). The contemporary polycultural education philosophy definitely interested in the approach of V.S. Bibler to the interpretation of culture as a holistic human activity on the basis of which come up the converging edges of the main forms of spiritual self-determination of our consciousness and mentality of the destiny. In understanding of the Bibler's dialogical school, the culture is acquired in interpersonal relations and includes axiological, symbolic and institutional components. In fact, this approach is due to attempt to understand the culture within the postmodern paradigm and provides understanding of the objective basis of dialogism inherent to the deep meanings of culture. According to Bibler: "Modern thinking is based on the schematism of culture where the 'highest' of human consciousness and esse begin the dialogical communication with previous forms of culture (antiquity, Middle Ages and new time)".

The origin of the contemporary dialogue philosophy has become a method of L. Feuerbach philosophy. Developing within its own traditions it followed the path of gradual renovation and one or another thinker or researcher of the dialogue (M. Buber, E. Levinas, F. Rosenzweig, etc.) has contributed there specific features.

From philosophical and methodological point of view, the dialogue within the framework of this approach to polycultural education assumes the creation of conditions wherein different philosophical systems do not compete and are not rejected, but coexist and interact (Bibler, 1998: 176).

In the tideway of the dialogue approach, unfolding the essence of polycultural education, A.

V. Shafrikova emphasizes that it focused on preservation and development of full diversity of cultural values, norms, samples and forms of activity that exist in a given society and is based on the principles of dialogue and interaction between different cultures. She considers the polycultural education in international and cross-national context as correlation between different cultural environments in the fields of education. Regarding, T.B. Menskaya notes that "polycultural education in society has not only different meaning for different people but at a deep level is due to economic realities and ideology of different societies".

L.G. Vedenina using the concept of "intercultural education" directly associates it with learning a foreign language and defines as "the polylogue of languages and cultures, teaching designed for integration of the trainee into the system of the world cultures" (Vedenina, 1993).

In the sphere of the dialogue approach they also emphasize the **activity concept** of polycultural education, which authors are considered to be Y.A. Sorokin and E.F. Tarasov. Researchers believe that assimilation of one culture by the representatives of a different cultural environment is possible only in the course of any activity. Supporters of the activity concept believe that proximate activity performance is preceded by orientation in conditions of the expected activity.

In the process of orientation, a person realizes the teachable fragments of a different culture and "reformulate" them into the terms of his own linguistic and cultural experience (Bibler, 1998: 15-17).

G. Pommerin understands the essence of polycultural education similarly, defining it as a response of pedagogical knowledge to the realities of multicultural society, as the **activity-oriented conception**, which takes into account the changes in society and initiate innovation processes (Pommerin, 1989: 31). This attitude is shared by the number of foreign scientists who deal with the problems of polycultural education (Hohmann, 1983: 19).

In addition to these concepts inside of the dialogue approach can be mentioned the conception of **multi-perspective education**, the authors of which are H. Gopfert, and U. Schmidt. The essence of this conception is in requirement of review and reconsideration of the education programs in educational institutions at all levels (schools and universities) to overcome the direction for monocultural orientation. The authors consider it necessary to form and develop the ability to engage in intercultural communication, to create the idea of cultural processes, taking place in society and all over the world, to plant understanding of the multilevel structure of any culture. In education it is also proposed to change from eventive history to social history (Gopfert, 1985, 13-28).

Schmidt as well as Gopfert considers polycultural education in the overall context of education theory, adjecting to this approach the social, cultural and political analysis of situation. The result of his research was the educational program "Intercultural education", which consists of three main educational groups: "The problem of ethnocentrism", "Life in the world" and "The crisis of the industrial society". Schmidt like Gopfert wants to make the educational process open in relation to the different perspectives. He believes that "Intercultural communication involves the richness and diversity of thinking and promotes the overall development of the personality by elements which are present in other cultures" (Schmidt, 1987: 117).

Recently as part of pedagogical discussions on the issues of polycultural education appear concepts and separate theoretical theses, which conventionally may be grouped into meaningful boundaries of the **social-psychological approach**. In science it has not yet formed to the full. However, we can already highlight some of its distinguishing features, the most important of which is the consideration of multicultural education as a special way of shaping of certain socio-adjusting and value-orientational dispositions, communicative and empathetic skills, that allow a graduate of middle schools and higher schools to implement an intensive intercultural reciprocity, to exhibit understanding of the other cultures and tolerance for their bearers.

Significant contribution to the development of the social-psychological approach in general and the **concept of antiracist education** in particular was made by K. Mullard, M. Cole and S. Troun. The abovementioned researchers believed that the antiracist education is not a component but an alternative for polycultural education since basically both concepts have different educational strategies.

Thus in the concept of polycultural education the individualization of the racism problem is observed, while specific economic and political contradictions (conditions) are not touched upon, though they advert to both the indigenous population and minorities which are the subject of racial discrimination. K. Mullard sees the difference between polycultural and antiracist educations in that models of the first are focused on the culture while models of the second are focused on the structure of society. The author believes that polycultural education is aimed at formation of tolerance and respect for cultural differences and the concept of antiracist education involves the education of the active position concerning injustice and inequality. He sees the purpose of polycultural education in development of the ability for critical perception of the stereotypes and cliché which are common to a person concerning other cultures and their representatives and in education with school children and students of the tolerant attitude towards them (Essed, 1991).

Thus, the representatives of this concept see a lack of the polycultural education models in their political apathy which they link to interpretation of all problems occurring in the society from culturological positions.

Another concept evolved as part of the social and psychological approach is the **concept of "cultural differences".** Among its followers we can call R. Bordeaux, S. Gaitanides, K. Taylor, A. Memmi, B. Hackle who considered the pedagogical objectives of polycultural education to incorporate formation of a tolerant attitude to the life style and style of behavior of others, which is based on the understanding of cultural differences capable to result in conflict situations and contradictions between the representatives of various social levels (Gaitanides, 1994: 17-25); promotion of differentiation capacities within the scope of other culture, capability to carry out estimate of standards and system of values according to their historically specified significance for certain types of activity (Hackl, 1993: 10-11); comprehension by the students of the role played by the culture varieties and other cultures in shaping up of emotional sphere of a personality thus turning into the source of its requirement and emotions (Memmi, 1987: 13); bringing up the ability to incorporate the elements of the alien cultures into own system of values and thinking (Gaitanides, 1994: 26).

In the tradition of social-psychological approach has developed the **concept of social education**. The authors of this concept (H. Essinger, I. Graff, R. Schmitt) emphasize the following objectives of polycultural education: empathy, solidarity and ability to resolve conflicts. H. Essinger, I. Graff understand empathy as the ability to understand another person by viewing the situation from his standpoint, by attempting to realize his system of values and mode of perception while exercising sympathy towards him (Aleksashenkova, 2005: 22-26).

In our opinion in the scientific plan the most serious research, considering polycultural education as social upbringing and training, are the works of R. Schmitt, one of the few authors touching upon the polycultural education psychological prerequisites. As a method of polycultural education he boosts the problem role playing game, in the course of which becomes apparent the discrepancy between perceived and derived at cognitive level knowledge and spontaneous emotional reactions. R. Schmitt formulates two fundamental principles of social education that relate to polycultural education in the framework of social training:

1.   The principle of avoidance of regulatory differences. One must be careful in dealing with the otherness and foreignness of another culture and its representatives.

2.   The principle of "social proximity". It is expedient to include actual, real problems and situations in discussion to make them easier to be correlated to one's own experience (Schmitt, 1979: 304).

In the tideway of the above mentioned approaches the Russian researchers study the problems of polyculturalism in various courses: as a cultural phenomenon, as a mechanism of transfer of social experience, as a scope of pedagogical values, as a part of pedagogical culture of a teacher, as new information environment, as a paradigm of XXI-st century education, etc. (by M. A. Bogomolova, E. V. Bondarevskaya, V. P. Borisenkova, O. V. Gukaleko, A. I. Danilyuk, Y. S. Davydov, A. N. Dzhurinsky, M. N. Kuzmina, L. L. Suprunova, etc.).

The scientists in their works are guided by L.S. Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory of behavior and mentality development whereby the mental growth sources and determinants belong to historically developing culture. According to the scientist, every function in the cultural development of personality appears in two plans, first in social plan, then – in psychological, first between people (as an interpsychic category), then inside a person (as an intrapsychic category).

The transition from the outside to the inside of the psyche development process changes its structure and functions. There are real people and society relations behind all higher functions.

Thus, A.N. Djurinsky considers the polycultural education as the alternative to international socialistic upbringing, shaping of a personality beyond the national culture on condition of unity and ideological integration of the society. At that the polycultural education is focused on the cultures' interrelation, one of which dominates. M.A. Bogomolova believes that the polycultural education by its nature is close to the international education and provides for interpersonal interaction, stands up to nationalism and racism. It is aimed on the development of the cultural and educational values, interaction of different cultures in a situation of pluralistic cultural adaptation to the different cultural values.

V.V. Makaev, Z.A. Malkova, L.L. Suprunova identify the polycultural education with shaping of personality, able to active and effective life in multinational and polycultural environment, possessing the developed sense of understanding and respect to the different cultures, skills to live in peace and harmony with people of different nationalities, races and confessions.

A number of authors (N.D. Galskova, L.L. Paramonova, V.V. Safonova, E.A. Sokolova) associate the readiness to accept other culture, other way of life with manifestation of tolerance, because only mutual tolerance of the people of different nationalities can resist to hatred.

Analysis of the above mentioned main approaches to polycultural education shows that all of them complement each other in subject. In accordance with the above mentioned approaches

and concepts the polycultural education is a complex multidimensional pedagogical phenomenon, involving the formation of social-cultural competence, socialization of the students, development of their apperception as cultural-historical persons with the need for continuous cultural self-education, which ensures development of a pluralistic picture of the world.

On the basis of the above analysis we have formed our own vision of the polycultural education essence. We consider the polycultural education as a kind of purposeful socialization of the students, providing the following:

- *at the cognitive level* – the development of samples and values of the world culture, cultural-historical and social experience of different countries and nations.;

- *at the value-motivational level* – shaping of the socio-adjusting and value-orientational dispositions of the students to intercultural communication and exchange, as well as development of the tolerance towards other countries, nations, cultures and social groups;

- *at the activity cum behavioral level* – active social interaction with the representatives of various cultures with one's own cultural identity retaining.

CONCLUSION

Polycultural education is of particular importance against the background of the multinational structure of the country and development of communication both in its limits and at the international level. Implying acquaintance with the cultural diversity of the homeland and the world in general, such education promotes upbringing of the national consciousness and tolerance, valuable qualities of the modern person, "person of the world".

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors confirm that the submitted data does not contain the conflict of interest.

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