

Actual Issues of the Development of Life-Long Cross-Cultural Educational Environment

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Doi:10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n27p655

Abstract

New socio-economic conditions impose specific requirements to the education system as a whole, including all stages and forms of vocational education. The article discusses the role and place of a diversified, multi-level system of training, which provides a variety of characteristics and volumes of educational and vocational programs that actualizes the problem of improving the system of life-long cross-cultural educational environment in general. The authors present a gist of theoretical analysis of the main ways of personal self-development and the results of experimental studies on the implementation of the cross-cultural approach in accordance with the new educational standards in the integration of the national education system in the world educational space.

Keywords: Cross-cultural approach, life-long education, self-development, self-improvement, cross-cultural educational environment, general cultural background, pedagogic experiment.

1. Introduction

Plenty of different circumstances, such as poor quality of initial education, high rate of unemployment, political or social isolation and reduced possibilities are the main reason of ongoing number of marginalized people and their exclusion from modern society and from being a citizen at all. As a result we can determine the main barriers why individuals may be outsiders, for example, widespread policy-related barrier, and due to it dispositional barrier which supposes lack of the self-esteem and self-confidence of the adult as a learner, often associated with bad results and low rating scores in previous educational experiences.

"Multicultural world needs expanding adult learning opportunities in relation to linguistic, social and cultural integration; developing appropriate and effective teaching and promoting more inter-cultural learning"[1].

Being a social institute, education guarantees the succession of social experience of generations. Tolerance towards people of other nationalities and acquiring their traditions and culture is the best way of development of students' tolerant viewpoint based on "the creative perception of the national spiritual and cultural values, realization of the idea of unity and diversity of the surrounding world and understanding of the place and role of their national culture in the context of world culture" [2].

It is necessary to grow up an active, well-educated and tolerant personality with creative thinking, various views and readiness to get new knowledge and develop substantial skills all life long; treat people from different cultures with tolerance and generosity. So that, the development of a tolerant personality is one of the most important pedagogical tasks.

Being a process of self education public education at the same time should be controlled, so, the human "self-" is constructed according to the image of culture and its reproduction. "Thus, the education in general can be represented in the form of the educational system, the educational process and the individual results of this process" [3].

This article describes such approach and its outcome for a group of students and EFL teachers. EFL teachers have not had much contact with the field of intercultural communication. Nevertheless, many of these teachers have had some personal experience of functioning in more than one culture, for example as an EFL teacher in a foreign country, or of dealing with students from cultures other than theirs. This is the case in almost every EFL classroom nowadays: even Russian native speakers teaching English in Russian schools have students of foreign origin or of mixed background.

2. Methods of Research

We are currently undergoing a scientific project "Multicultural Educational environment" the part of which is our pedagogic experiment (2010 - 2014). For the purpose of this study there have been examined three groups of people: students of High School, University students, EFL teachers who were chosen according to the levels of education. They were divided into two groups: an experimental group which receives intervention, and another control group without any intervention.

The following research questions guided the analysis of monitoring results and evaluation strategy:

1. What is the real level of cross-cultural experience of students and students, and its realization in their educational environment; their level of tendency to self-realization in multicultural environment? (stating phase of pedagogic experiment, 2010-2011)
2. What should be done to create such educational environment bearing in mind the educational objectives and self-development in multicultural world? (formative phase of pedagogic experiment, 2011-2014)

Finally, through our analyses we wished to probe the larger question of how the language teaching might influence the process of self-development of a new type of personality – teacher of language and culture.

3. Results and Discussion

Program and regulatory requirements of all educational levels put forward the main task - to prepare for life and work in multinational, multicultural society, which implies a high level of development of the personality and individuality of the school student – university student – teacher.

The official regulations of general and professional training are focused on developing communicative competence and tolerance of personality with a certain level of language and intercultural skills, increased autonomy in self-improvement of own foreign language culture.

However, it is a fact that at the end of general education the majority of school students show a low level of foreign language intercultural competence, independent of his skills improve. The results of interviews and observations, tests, questionnaires of students (40 people, School #135, School #75, Kazan), attending training courses, level of language and intercultural competence are as follows:

Level Group	Pre- Intermediate	Intermediate	Advanced
School students (school leavers)	75%	15%	10%

As to the first-year students (67 students, Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, specialization 050100.62 "Teacher Education"), the results are also far from ideal.

General Language Test	Level of Language Competence			
	Pre- Intermediate	Intermediate	Upper intermediate	Advanced
Vocabulary	69%	18%	13%	
Grammar	73%	20%	7%	
Speaking	78%	12%	10%	
Self-Development	81%	11%	8%	

Graduating the university and getting a diploma of language teacher doesn't guarantee successful professional career: any inexperienced teacher faces that has no idea of what to do and doesn't know where to inquire (up to 90% of total of inexperienced teachers of English). Adaptation problems on a new place, gaps in knowledge and abilities do not leave time for systematic self-development (both language, and personal). Systematically, purposefully less than 10% of teachers are engaged in the self-improvement. The post degree level of professional development (each teacher takes courses of professional development once in every five years, distance course or face to face) [9] suggests saturation with new knowledge, skills and abilities correction, at the same time requiring a high level of self-reflection and creating, and that is the main problem of many teachers (including problems of passing regular qualification examinations).

Thus, insufficient attention to teaching foreign language from the perspective of the dominant self-identity and individuality of the school student-university student-teacher-professor ruins cross-cultural educational environment. According to the survey, results and interviews more than half of the students and teachers tend to think of themselves as independent people, striving for self-improvement (67%), ready to live in the multicultural word (64%). Although narrow

understanding of concepts such as "cultural identity", "self-improvement", and the necessary qualities, abilities and features to continuously improve themselves, to be a teacher of language and culture. Answers to the questionnaire were reduced to the common phrase, "self-improvement - improve themselves" (89%), "culture - traditions" (69%), and "tolerance" is most likely due to "kindness" ("calm person", "don't pay attention to differences", etc.). There is also personal rejection of "creative jobs" (49%) and the need for rapid non-standard solutions (61%), evasion from the unconventional situations and postponing the decision for later, the search for clues in the reference literature, advice from teachers, more experienced person (53%), unwillingness to take responsibility for the decision (68%), etc. At the same time, such a rare usage of creative tasks in the learning process at all levels of general and professional education (from school to professional development training courses - essay writing and monologue-dialogue scheme, rewriting reference books text).

Group	Level of self-development			Level of Need of Self-Development		
	Active	Depended	Stopped	Potentially Ready	Aware of Personal Need	In Need of Assistance in Organization
School students	-			61%	80%	68%
University students	-			75%	88%	77%
Inexperienced teachers	-			63%	70%	60%
Experienced teachers	-		-	53%	61%	58%

The data obtained in the course of the stating phase of pedagogic experiment leads to the conclusion that most of the students and teachers are ready (in case of professional assistance) to self-improvement within the cross-cultural educational environment

The results of the stating phase allowed planning the formative stage of pedagogic experiment. The main purpose was to create the specified organizational and pedagogical conditions and test the effectiveness of their implementation in practice at all levels of general and professional education.

All work on the organization of pedagogical conditions of continuity self-identity and individuality competitive teacher was based on a creative activity as the foundation of a holistic process of self-development, which included a system of creative tasks. Developed and adapted, they were placed in the logic of the phase complication: divergent, stimulus-productive, heuristic, adaptive-creative:

In the first – **indicative** – stage, the deeper theoretical acquaintance with the processes of self-improvement and self-identity and personality of the teacher at any stage of the educational level; assistance in the organization of pedagogical support, the formation and development of self-improving personality and individuality as the basis for a successful professional teacher of language and culture; creating psychologically comfortable field of pedagogy reciprocal efforts to jointly self-teacher and student. The result was a change in the orientation phase of the test ideas about the process of individual and personal self-development, the formation of interest to the knowledge of themselves and others understand the desire to work independently of each other, which made it possible to move to the next stage of the study.

On the second – **searching** – stage was to search for the optimal management mechanisms cultivation of personality and individuality student-student-teacher. There has been developed and implemented a model of continuous professional and personal teacher of language and culture, which includes the following components: the target component, a substantial component, technological component, an assessment and score component [7]. Within the practical training in the use of self-developing technology training and education, a person analyzes the possibilities of technology individualization and differentiation of the educational process; problem, modular training, etc. The purpose of this work was to create a motivational setting for using already known technologies in the process of their own self-improvement, intercultural self-identity and practical activities of his organization in the educational process. Diagnostic sections showed improvement in the process of inquiring self-improvement subjects, successful application of acquired knowledge and skills in the practice of the management of their cultivation.

On the third – **transformative** – step needed to coordinate the activities of all participants in the experiment: the teaching staff, the psychological service in the process of system control and evaluation techniques that identify the needs of formation in cultivation and the achieved level of development of this need. On transformative step, the test showed resistance of tumors in the formation and development of all spheres of personality based on the dominant self-improvement and intercultural self-identity and readiness to a new level - professional self-improvement.

On the fourth – **integrating** – step, the main goal was to integrate the efforts of all the participants of the educational process in order to create adaptive-developing cross-cultural educational environment of self-development

and individuality of school student – university student – teacher. The results of the integrating phase showed resistance to self-motivation, focus in building their professional and life path.

At each stage of the experimental work self-improvement and intercultural self-identity, level was determined according to different activities, the adequacy of self-assessment of their own capacities and abilities, personality traits.

Stimulating creativity to transform and improve oneself based on the use of special techniques individually oriented training and education, among which played a leading role to various embodiments of gaming.

Stage of experiment	High school	University	Professional development training
Indicative	I term	1 term	Introductory course lectures
Searching	II term		
Transformative	III term	2 term	Seminars, tests. Final research paper
Integrating	IV term		

Each stage was aimed at achieving a certain level of self-improvement and intercultural self-identity of school student-university student-teacher under the terms of the theory of learning activities. Thus, the purpose of each stage of the experimental work is the qualitative and quantitative changes in the progressive process of intercultural self-identity of the student-student-teacher.

According to the data obtained at each stage of the experimental work, there is a certain tendency to preferential predominance of higher levels of creative self-improvement of the subjects in the experimental groups. The majority (an average of the experimental group ~ 87.7%) does not reach the creative (high) level of self-improvement, which is probably difficult to implement within traditional mass education environment (teachers need cooperation).

However, the percentage of students in the final stage of the experiment the average and above average levels of creative self-improvement and intercultural self-identity, which reached, respectively:

- medium: in the experimental ~ 16.3% and ~ 34.3% in the control;
- higher than average ~ 66.5% in the experimental and ~ 7.2% of controls.

This points to the advantage of the subjects in the experimental groups and proves the effectiveness of our model to ensure continuity of the educational process aimed at the cultivation of personality and individuality competitive specialist.

4. Conclusion

In terms of mass of traditional education, level of self-identity and individuality of the personality is not high enough and does not change significantly by the end of the educational stage. This testifies to the shortcomings in the implementation of the requirements of development and self-identity and individuality, and highlights the need for special organizational and pedagogical conditions of cross-cultural educational environment to ensure continuity stages of life-long education and the process of personal self-improvement and cultural self-identity [8].

Experimental work consisted of several stages. Under the stage understood logically complete segment of the educational process, characterized by clear targets have been, subject content, technological support, the result of which has performed the appropriate level of self-improvement.

5. Summary

Teacher by their actions estimates his worldview opens to students the existence of social life, spiritual, as a special sphere regulated by the content of general ideas - ideas about the purpose and meaning of life, human capabilities, its properties and qualities of the relationship between people. In this case, any of its action with respect to the disciples, he manifests himself as a person, reflecting their self-concept. These psychological education and reflect a specific historical time and that personal life journey of a man who he was before the start of their career, and the ideal to which he guided the teacher.

The article reflects the desire to give some guidance and basic directions of individual self-improvement and intercultural self-identity of personality. Its main content is related to the development of self-awareness and tolerant teacher. It is to him based on his personal experiences and opportunities necessary to create new social and spiritual quality of life through direct interaction with students in multicultural world.

Thus, the study of the question of intercultural self-identity and individuality of school student- university student - teacher solves one of the most difficult questions posed to a system of continuous teacher education needs of modern

society.

High level of human "self" - self-regulation, self-education, self-assertion, self - identity characteristics and personality of the modern language teacher, which allows it to adapt to a world of fierce competition, the huge flow of constantly changing information, the rapid aging of the once acquired knowledge, etc.

Self-improvement regulator acts of social, personal and individual claims; educator, promoting a conscious approach to the choice of his position in life, analyzes needs and opportunities, and to improve them.

The process of self-improvement is a dynamic structural-level education, reflecting the unity of all areas of personality and personal qualities. Their degree of formation allows you to select different levels: low, below average, average, above average and high.

The predominance of low and lower-middle level of creative self in terms of traditional mass training and education, revealed during the experimental work indicates that spontaneously organized cultivation process is ineffective; therefore need specially organized effort aimed at fostering self-improvement and self-identity individuality, competitive professional [6].

Creating cross-cultural educational environment, aimed at the development of the process of self-improvement, includes a series of specially developed organizational and pedagogical conditions:

1. The introduction of a single installation on raising a self-improvement as a basis for the success and competitiveness of the teacher in the educational process of each stage of the educational training;
2. Provision of psychological comfort of the pedagogical process at all educational stages to remove the barriers of self-improvement;
3. Integration sub-knowledge and sub-skills in the content of each stage of the educational preparation of competitive teacher on the basis of new educational technologies.
4. Turn on the system of psychological and physiological knowledge and skills as a methodological basis for the conscious control their development as an individual and the individual in the educational process of each stage.
5. Structuring the regulatory requirements for the individual, taking into account its individual psychological characteristics, spiritual and cognitive needs and the diagnostic results of its professional orientation and professional competence at each stage of training and education.

Analysis of the results of experimental work has shown that the conditions of play activity, creating an atmosphere of unregulated communication, facilitate the transition from the reproductive and recital activities to creative and resourceful, as they allow to use the reserve capacity of each person and individuality and to move away from the stereotypes and patterns in their thinking and activity.

Based on the adopted assumptions the experimental work was organized in School #135, School #75 and Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University. Its implementation required the development of a special course "Intercultural self-identity and in multicultural educational environment", which was conducted with high school students, university students and teachers, which made it possible to coordinate the work of all levels of the educational training of intercultural personality of the teacher and ensure its continuity with the process of self-improvement.

In the course of theoretical and experimental studies confirmed the hypothesis about the effectiveness of the conditions for ensuring the continuity of individual self-improvement and educational stages of training teachers in the improvement of life-long cross-cultural learning process.

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