

**DCCD 2020****Dialogue of Cultures - Culture of Dialogue: from Conflicting to Understanding****TRAINING PRESCHOOL SPECIALISTS FOR ORGANIZATION  
AND REALIZATION OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE**

Natalia B. Polkovnikova (a)\*, Lyudmila E. Osipenko (b), Sergey M. Lesin (c)

\*Corresponding author

(a) Moscow City University, 16 Stoliarniy pereulok, Moscow, Russia, polkovnikovanb@mgpu.ru

(b) Moscow City University, 16 Stoliarniy pereulok, Moscow, Russia

(c) Moscow City University, 2-y Selskohozyaystvennyy proezd, 4 korp. 1., Russia, Moscow

***Abstract***

The article is devoted to the search for pedagogical ways to include people in the intercultural dialogue. An overview of research on teaching preschool children and their families intercultural dialogue in foreign countries is presented. There is a need for special training of preschool education staff at the University in order to effectively organize and conduct intercultural dialogue. The article reveals the possibilities of the Moscow City University that trains preschool teachers for 25 years. The article discusses the problem of teaching preschool teachers' professional competence in conducting an intercultural dialogue with children and their families in Moscow kindergartens. The article describes and interprets the results of an empirical study of the current state of preschool teachers' competencies during professional activity. There is a request for special training in such competencies during the process of obtaining higher education at the University. It is confirmed that Moscow preschool teachers demand special knowledge and skills to work with children and families of migrants from Central, and South-East Asia, Transcaucasian and other. The preschool teachers' needs of integrating migrant children into the General educational process, helping them to engage in joint activities with other children and preschool teachers is identified. This will solve the current problems of adaptation and acculturation of migrant children, teaching indigenous children how to interact with children of other ethnic groups, and preparing migrant children for school. The solution is proposed by building a pedagogical system of intercultural communication competencies in preschool teachers within a specially organized module.

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## 1. Introduction

Inclusion of people in intercultural dialogue is a key task of modern civil society. As the European experience shows, today there is a question of survival in a multicultural environment. Survival of people as social units and as a biological species. Today, everyone should have a primary understanding of the characteristics of different ethnic cultures and ways of ethical interaction with people belonging to them. The modern works of Russian scientists such as Vikulova (as cited in Baryshnikov et al., 2017), Gevorkyan (2015), Gevorkyan et al. (2015), Gerasimova (as cited in Baryshnikov et al., 2017); Postavnyova (as cited in Gevorkyan et al., 2015); Savenkova (as cited in Gevorkyan et al., 2015); Tareva (2019) devoted to ethical interaction with people and how to teach in this context. This need is especially acute for residents of large Metropolitan areas, such as Moscow. Their interaction with other cultures begins in early childhood. Therefore, it is necessary to start teaching the norms of intercultural dialogue to young children living in a megalopolis.

There is a lot of experience in foreign countries, first of all, in Canada, in the EU countries (the Netherlands, Norway, Finland, and others) that has been accumulated in teaching preschool children to conduct intercultural dialogue and in organizing intercultural communication by preschool teachers and teachers. In our opinion, the most significant modern researches in this area are the following.

Pedagogy in an intercultural context and comparative education on international level Niyozov (2008; 2016).

Interdisciplinary studies of education in a multicultural society by Professor Judy Mesman of Leiden University (the Netherlands). Study of the origins of ethnic prejudices that parents pass on to their young children (2017-2019). Positive parenting in families of the ethnic majority and ethnic minorities (Emmena, Midshipman, van Usendoorn and Malda) (Ekmekci et al., 2016).

Research on pre-school education in the multicultural society of Heidi Katarina Harju-Luukkainen (Heidi Katarina, Nord University, Norway). Description of childhood migration and mobility in Finland by Harju-Luukkainen (2019). Research by Harju-Luukkainen et al. (in press) and Harju-Luukkainen et al. (2019) on strategies for pedagogical support of communication for children aged 3-6 years to master learning in multilingual kindergartens in Finland (Harju-Luukkainen et al., 2019). Analysis and description of the European approach in the professional training of preschool teachers to work in a multicultural kindergarten by Ueffing and Harju-Luukkainen (2019).

Analysis of the development of multicultural preschool education in the Finnish context by Professor Mikko Ojala (2010).

Design of pedagogical approaches to the development and training of preschool children of different ethnic groups, to interaction with their families to include children in the Finnish preschool education of Hanna Leena Lastikka, Lisa Karlsson, Lasse Lipponen (Arvola et al., 2017), Karlsson Lisa, Lasse Lipponen (Lastikka & Lipponen, 2016) (2016-2019) (University of Helsinki).

The studies listed above describe that a significant number of migrants successfully adapt to foreign countries. It is proved that this is facilitated by the special work of teachers of preschool education with children's families and with children themselves in kindergartens and centers for migrants.

Moscow City University (MCU) is the largest regional University that has been training preschool teachers since 1995. For 25 years, the University has been implementing bachelor's, specialty and master's

degree programs under the "Preschool education" profile, which include separate sections and topics related to folk pedagogy and ethnopsychology, the education of Patriotic and civic feelings of preschoolers, and the development of ethnic tolerance in children. At the same time, the training of teachers for kindergartens in the Moscow region requires to form the pool of pedagogical competencies for the organization and conduct of intercultural dialogue in professional activity today. These competencies in the field of intercultural communication are in demand by society, the city, and the state. They include knowledge about ethnic characteristics, national mentality and culture of communication with representatives of different ethnic groups, and their consideration in the daily professional work of a preschool teacher.

## **2. Problem Statement**

Russia is just now beginning to face migration problems that have been successfully solved by some foreign countries in recent decades. Integration of migrants into Russian society cannot be achieved without building a pedagogical system for teaching intercultural dialogue. This system consists of communication at different levels education professionals: with children, their families, and colleagues from different ethnic cultures. Special training is required for effective organization and realization of intercultural dialogue in the educational sphere, primarily at the pre-school level.

## **3. Research Questions**

In recent years, increasingly there was a request from teachers of kindergartens in the Moscow megalopolis to study technologies for organizing and realization an intercultural dialogue with preschoolers and their families, colleagues, and representatives of different ethnic cultures. Our pilot study realized in 2019 (Lesin, Osipenko, & Polkovnikova, 2019; Lesin, Osipenko, Polkovnikova, & Bykova, 2019) confirmed that Moscow preschool specialists require special knowledge and skills to work with children and families of migrants from Middle, Central, South-East Asia, Transcaucasian and other foreign regions.

Using teaching practice in kindergartens teachers and students of the University understand that they should integrate migrant children into the General educational process to help them to join in collaborative activities with other children and preschool teachers. This is necessary for the adaptation and acculturation of migrant children, for teaching indigenous children how to interact with children of other ethnic groups, and for preparing migrant children for school. Our pilot study (2019) (Lesin, Osipenko, & Polkovnikova, 2019; Lesin, Osipenko, Polkovnikova, & Bykova, 2019) answered the question if preschool teachers of Moscow megalopolis kindergartens have special professional competencies in this area today.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

Study, analysis and generalization of data on the needs of working teachers in Moscow kindergartens in special competencies for organizing and realizing intercultural dialogue

The research tasks. 1) Describe and give characteristic the ethnic environment where Moscow preschool teachers work. 2) Determine the level of comprehension of preschool teachers of changes in professional activity because of the dynamics of the ethnic composition of pupils of kindergartens of the Moscow megalopolis. 3) Identify the understanding of the need for special knowledge and skills for

organizing and conducting intercultural dialogue among teachers of Moscow kindergartens. 4) Identify the features of intercultural communication of subjects of the educational process (teachers, preschoolers, parents) in kindergartens of the Moscow megalopolis.

Each task of the research was focused at achieving a specific result, which was expressed in obtaining statistical data and their interpretation.

## 5. Research Methods

In 2019, at the Institute of Pedagogy and Psychology of Education of Moscow City University, we did a study of the current state of competence of preschool teachers in the organization and conduct of intercultural dialogue during professional activity

The research methodology was based on the cultural and historical concept of mental development. Activity-based and personality-oriented approaches were implemented.

The research hypothesis. If preschool teachers work in an ethnically heterogeneous environment, they lack professional knowledge and skills to organize and conduct intercultural dialogue in kindergartens of the Moscow megalopolis.

Description of the selection. 106 undergraduate students of the pedagogical direction of pre-school profile of full-time and part-time forms of education were in experiment. All students had College preschool education and experience as preschool teachers in kindergartens of the Moscow megalopolis. The selection consisted of women aged 23-48 years, during the experiment, the students were not differentiated by age groups.

The procedure of empirical research was carried out using a survey with closed and open questions. The survey was conducted in subgroups of 10-12 students in the classrooms of the University. The time for filling out the survey was the same for everyone and it was 50 minutes. Statistical data collection and processing were performed using MS Excel.

## 6. Findings

To solve the first research task: to characterize the ethnic environment where Moscow preschool teachers work, there were the following open questions in the survey. Are there children of different Nations in the group where you work? If so, which ones? Have there always been children of different Nations in groups where you have worked before? If so, which ones?

The aggregated quantitative results are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 01.** Results of the study of conclusions of Moscow preschool teachers about the ethnic characteristics of the environment of the kindergarten group

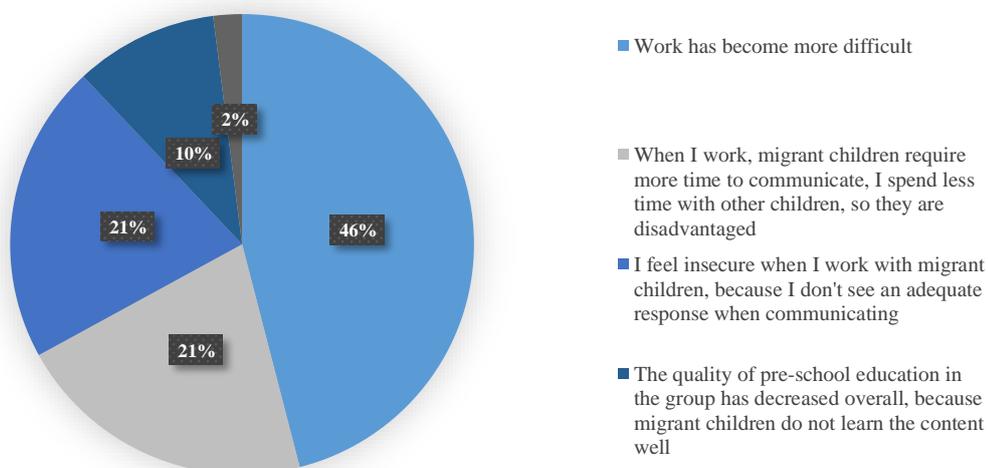
Ethnic characteristics of the kindergarten group's environment at present	Ethnically homogeneous environment of the kindergarten group	2%
	Ethnically heterogeneous environment of the kindergarten group	97%
	It was difficult to characterize the ethnic environment of the kindergarten group (No characteristic)	1%

Ethnic characteristics of the kindergarten group's environment before the present	Ethnically homogeneous environment of the kindergarten group	7%
	Ethnically heterogeneous environment of the kindergarten group	93%
	It was difficult to characterize the ethnic environment of the kindergarten group (No characteristic)	–

The obtained quantitative data suggest that respondents characterize the environment of preschool groups in Moscow kindergartens as ethnically heterogeneous. The study did not set an objective to find out which type of ethnic groups in kindergartens of the Moscow megalopolis are statistically more or less significant. Therefore, data on the quantitative ratio of preschool children of different ethnic groups were not collected. The empirical data obtained by us show that the ethnic composition of the Moscow kindergarten contingent has changed. According to the responses of preschool teachers, more children of Central Asian ethnic groups, mostly Tajiks, Kyrgyz and Uzbeks, attend Moscow's kindergartens today. The ethnic groups of Transcaucasia are less represented, and Azerbaijanis and Armenians were more often noticed among them. Preschool teachers' responses about their past work experience with children from different ethnic groups in Moscow's kindergartens suggest a different relationship. Previously, there were more children of Transcaucasian ethnic groups (Azerbaijanis and Armenians) in kindergartens in the Moscow megalopolis, and fewer children of Central Asian ethnic groups (Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Kirghiz).

To solve the second research task: to determine the level of comprehension of preschool teachers of changes in professional activity because of the dynamics of the ethnic composition of pupils of kindergartens of the Moscow megalopolis, there were the following questions in survey. Can we say that there have been changes in your work because the kindergarten group is attended by children from different ethnic groups (closed question)? If Yes, what has changed in your work (open question)?

We obtained the following quantitative and qualitative results. All 100% of respondents said that there were changes in their work related to the heterogeneous ethnic composition of preschool groups. Responses from preschool teachers about the nature of these changes are summarized in the diagram in Figure 1.



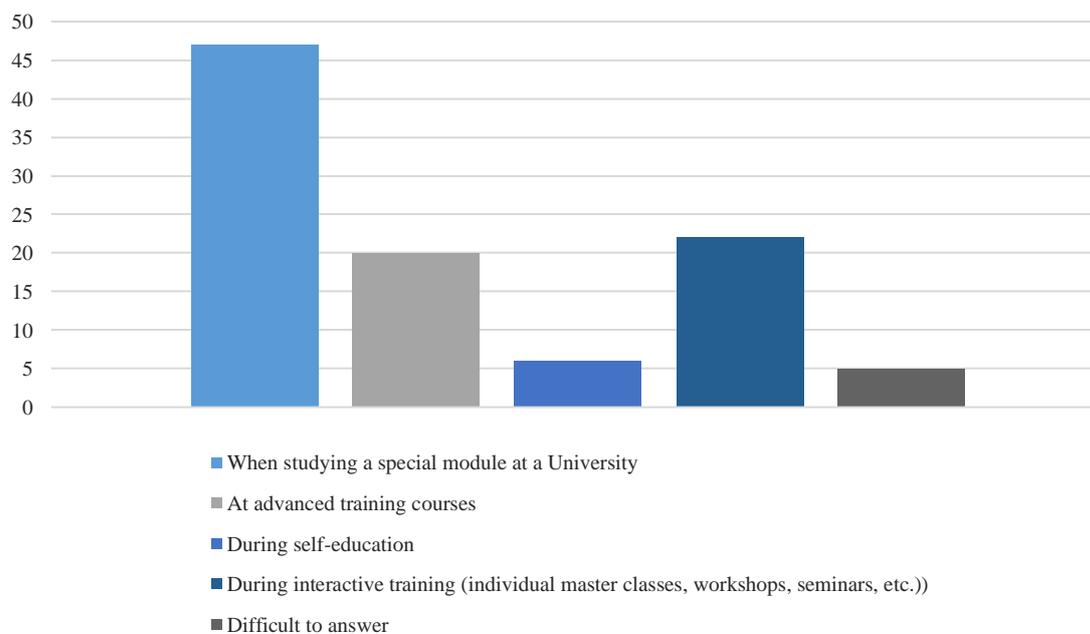
**Figure 01.** Qualitative analysis of preschool teachers' comprehension of changes in their professional activity because of the dynamics of the ethnic composition of preschool children in the Moscow megalopolis

In Figure 1 the preschool teachers' responses show that changes in their work have negative nature and are associated with difficulties in performing professional duties and difficulties in communicating with migrant children.

To solve the third research task: to identify the understanding of the need for special knowledge and skills for organizing and conducting intercultural dialogue, teachers of Moscow kindergartens were asked the following closed questions in the survey. Do you need special knowledge and skills to work with children of different ethnic groups? If so, how would you like to get this knowledge?

The respondents' choice of answers offered in the survey was divided as follows. 83% of the answers – they really need special knowledge and skills to work with children of different ethnic groups, 16% chose the answer "they need", 1% of preschool teachers found it difficult to answer the question, no one chose the answer "they do not need".

The quantitative results of the responses to the question of how preschool teachers would like to get special knowledge and skills to work with children of different ethnic groups are shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 02.** Quantitative analysis of responses to the question of how preschool teachers would like to get special knowledge and skills to work with children of different ethnic groups

Thus, almost all respondents requested special learning in the skills of organizing and conducting intercultural dialogue in their professional activity. The preferred choice of learning methods was to study the disciplines of a special module at the University. Preschool teachers' choice of interactive learning, such as participation in individual seminars, seminars, and refresher courses, was almost half that. Self-education was chosen by a small number of respondents.

To solve the fourth research task: to identify the features of intercultural communication of preschool teachers, preschoolers and their parents in kindergartens of the Moscow megalopolis, there were the following open questions. Do you understand your ethnicity and ethno-cultural differences with preschoolers of other ethnic groups and their parents in your work? How and in what way is this expressed?

Do migrant children feel comfortable in the preschool community where you work? Why do you think that? Are there any features of communication with families of migrant children in your work? What are they? Do you know which ethnic groups the children of the preschool group you work for belong to? Do you know about the culture, life and traditions of training children of these ethnic groups?

Quantitative and qualitative analysis of responses revealed the following. Ethnic identity is recognized by preschool teachers in situations where they work with children and parents who, primarily, do not speak or speak very poorly in Russian; secondly, have significant differences in appearance related to race (for example, Mongoloid face type, skin color) or costume (for example, headdresses of Muslim men and women). In other cases, according to the responses, preschool teachers do not realize their ethnicity, do not think about it in their work. They noted that their understanding of ethnic self-identity was expressed in comparing themselves with a representative of another ethnic group (a preschooler or his parent) and fixing differences, highlighting similar ethnicity in a group of preschoolers.

In responses, preschool teachers argued that migrant children feel more often discomfort than feel comfortable in the preschool group's children's community. Respondents noted that this because of difficulties in verbal communication since a significant number of migrant children and their parents do not speak or speak Russian quite badly. Some preschool teacher's responses often contained statements that there were almost no such situations in their previous experience of working with children of different ethnicities because all migrant children and their parents, with a few exceptions, spoke Russian well.

Among the features of communication with families of migrant children, preschool teachers most often called: the respectful attitude of parents of preschool children to the teacher, the parents' focus on contact with preschool teachers, the intention to understand and implement the teacher's recommendations, support his initiatives and wishes related to the care and education of migrant children.

It was clear from the responses that they were aware of the ethnicity of children in the preschool group. At the same time, none of the preschool teachers answered in the affirmative to the question whether they know about the culture, life and traditions of raising children of these ethnic groups.

Analysis and interpretation of the results allow us to constitute that preschool teachers of the Moscow megalopolis work in a heterogeneous ethnic environment today. Preschool teachers express their own ethnicity when working with migrant children and their families. Teachers compare themselves and representatives of another ethnic group in professional activity, opposition: friend-or-foe in relation to children of the preschool group and their parents. Migrant children and their families have communication difficulties related to cultural and language differences in Moscow kindergartens, which leads to social isolation of children in preschool groups. Parents of migrant children aim to interact with teachers in the care and education of preschoolers. Preschool teachers understand their own educational deficits and say that they do not have the special knowledge and skills to organize and realize an intercultural dialogue in their professional activity.

## **7. Conclusion**

Thus, future preschool teachers' special training for the organization and realization of intercultural dialogue in professional activity is an acute problem of modern higher education. Its solution will allow us to improve the educational process at Moscow City University. To solve it will allow us to improve the

educational process at the Moscow city pedagogical University. It can be achieved by building an education system by combining and coordinating multicultural knowledge from individual academic disciplines into a single module. It will help teach preschool teachers to organize and conduct intercultural dialogue in kindergartens of the Moscow megalopolis. The research proved that this is an actual students' request who works in Moscow kindergartens. This request needs an immediate reaction from the University.

It is possible to fill the gaps in the professional competencies of preschool teachers if we use the potential of Moscow City University. Today, special training is needed for preschool teachers in intercultural communication, especially with migrant children and working with their families. Such training should be implemented by building a pedagogical system in the educational process of our University. Pedagogical concepts and technologies for conducting intercultural dialogue will make professional training of preschool teachers in the Moscow megalopolis more effective. In the future, this will allow preschool teachers to work successfully and avoid professional mistakes in working with children and their parents in the ethnically heterogeneous environment of Moscow kindergartens. The study and use of ethnocultural knowledge will accelerate the progress of pedagogical science and practice in Moscow preschool education. Early training in intercultural dialogue skills will provide new perspectives for the development of a civil society based on humanistic principles.

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