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ON THE ISSUE OF INDICATORS IN CHILDREN PATRIOTIC
EDUCATION AT PRESCHOOL AGE

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Abstract

The present article discusses general and specific approaches to the issue of patriotic education of preschool children in educational institutions. The relevance of this question is acknowledged by the following leading scientists, researchers and pedagogues of the past and the present: L.I. Bozhovich, T.I. Doronova, V.A. Sukhomlinsky, K.D. Ushinsky and others (Bozhovich, 1995; Ushinsky, 1857). However, one should take into account that even each socio-cultural situation participates in correcting the “mechanism” which contributes to achieving the main aim. That is to instil love to Motherland, the careful attitude to its cultural-historical heritage and readiness to take socially responsible decisions to protect and defend its integrity. In view of the foregoing, the article presents a comparative analysis of the program on patriotic education. Furthermore, it describes the research on the base of Russian and Chinese kindergartens to specify children’s associations with the concept of Motherland. It analyzes the most frequent patriotism-related indicators chosen by preschool children. They are state symbols, socially important celebrations, events, objects (national toys, etc.), sights, etc. The results obtained testify to a partial similarity of patriotism-related indicators in the children of the both countries: home, the state flag, sights classified as national treasure, etc. Nevertheless, the authors assume that in children’s activity there is a lack of the purposeful correlation of these indicators as a basis of belonging to the Russian Federation. Consequently, there is a need formethodical and organizational works aimed at improving content and practical constituents of the patriotic education of preschool children.

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Keywords: Kindergarten, patriotic education, indicators of patriotic education.



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1. Introduction

The patriotic education of the younger generation is the most important part of the state policy in the field of education. The development of each state directly depends on that what is laid as a basis in children's minds. Politicians, public figures, sociologists, teachers and others continue to remind that it is the rising generation who provides continuity in development and progressive changes of every society. Since an early age, the following fundamental values influencing the formation of personality are established in future citizens: attitudes towards the residence, Motherland, surrounding people, the closest community and oneself you as a part of this community.

The patriotic education must be a cornerstone of education since childhood. The scientists of the past and the present have also addressed the importance of this direction in education.

It is important that, on the one hand, children's experiences caused by events are acquired by the child as the primary basis of an event and socialization. On the other hand, they are accompanied with positive emotional support. In the aggregate, these two aspects lay a foundation forming material and moral values. However, this process depends on the position of adults who surround a little citizen. L.I. Bozhovich stresses that "it is adults who bring the child into the world of social reality: socially developed skills, abilities, methods of practical activities, morals, etc. And as long as artifacts and objects of spiritual culture and cultural traditions contain historical forms of the mental life of people, the child, cognizing and acquiring culture, masters these forms. On this basis, peculiar social forms of the child's psyche develop" (Bozhovich, 1995).

The idea of patriotic education is presented in the federal statute "On Education in the Russian Federation" and also in the Federal State Educational Standard on preschool education. It describes the importance of promoting the development of respect and a sense of belonging to your own family, your birthplace and native land.

That is why, the earlier the purposeful patriotic education begins, the more stable the adoption of ancestral traditions, the reverence of country history, willingness to assume the responsibility for it, readiness to defend your nearest and dearest and your land is.

There is a patriotic constituent almost in every programme of preschool education as a part of the educational work with children (Childhood: A Model Educational Program of Pre-school Education, 2014; Zelenova, 2008; Ponomareva, 2016; From Birth to School. A Model General Education Program of Preschool Education, 2014; Grizik et al, 2010). For instance, in the tentative programme "Childhood", the authors give quite a general aim "to develop the ideas of the native city and the home country, civil and patriotic feelings" (Childhood: A Model Educational Program of Pre-school Education, 2014).

In the course of the programme called "From Birth to School", children are to learn about military professions along with the general aim "to cultivate children's patriotic feelings, to instil love to motherland, pride on its achievements, the confidence of the fact, that Russia is a great multiethnic country which has the heroic past and happy future, and to form primary gender-related perceptions (to encourage boys to be strong, brave and to become the defenders of the country) (From Birth to School. A Model General Education Program of Preschool Education, 2014).

In the partial patriotism-related educational programme for preschool children, called "We Live In Russia", one can find the following goals: the formation of a sense of love to native land, your birthplace

on the basis of initiation to native nature, culture and traditions; the formation of ideas about Russia as a native country and Moscow as the capital of Russia; patriotic education, respect to the cultural past of Russia; civil-patriotic feelings by way of learning the Russian state symbols. The practical material for the implementation of the corresponding teaching activities is also presented (Zelenova,2008).

One can find a detailed information about patriotic education in the tentative general educational programme “The Rainbow”. Taken into account age-related peculiarities of children, it proposes to introduce such concepts as “my country”, “my city (town, countryside, etc.)” and “my homeland”, with the names of the heroes of homeland, etc.; to give children the primary overview of the state they live in, to instil love to native nature in children, admiration of its beauty; to speak about natural resources, the unique objects of nature and the most important milestones in the history of the homeland (Grizik et al, 2010).

2. Problem Statement

As far as we can see, on the one hand, the methodical provision contains of a great number of different methods of patriotic education. However, on the other hand, it turns out to be quite monotonous and become actual only on certain holidays, such the Fatherland Defender’s Day, Victory Day, Russia Day, ets. That is why there are a lot of gaps in this field of education.

3. Research Questions

We carried out an extraordinary investigation in the kindergartens of Ekaterinburg city (Russia) and Changchun (Jilin province, China). The children were asked to draw their native land. 79 Russian and 82 Chinese preschool children at the age of 5 to 7 years old took part in this research.

4. Purpose of the Study

It is known that the child’s world starts from himself, from his family, home and the community. At the unconscious level, these are automatically included in the child’s concepts of “homeland”, that are close and native. Only afterwards, certain “indicators” are included. Such indicators in patriotic education can be represented with the Russian state symbols (flag, the State Emblem, etc.), socially important units (a capital, holidays and traditions), national crafts (toys, handmade stuff, details of the national costume, etc.), particular see sights etc.

The most numerous indicator of patriotic orientation was represented with the national flag, 58% of the Chinese children vs 30% of the Russian children only.

Another important indicator was represented with the images of the main sights of the country.

The Russian children chose to draw pictures related to the national holidays and military equipment. There were 15% of the pictures of the military parade theme and 9% devoted to the military equipment. Nevertheless, only 8% of the Chinese children’s pictures were related to the that theme.

Furthermore, there were 15% the pictures of the Tiananmen Square (the main square of People’s Republic of China); 13% presented the map of China or China as a part of the Earth; 7% presented the Great Wall of China as a special sight; famous places of Changchun (the park and zoo) were found in 5% of the pictures.

The Russian preschool children pleased us with the pictures of native nature (9%). 11% of the children drew the Red square and Russian symbols (matryoshka doll, the Kremlin, etc.). 22% of the pictures presented home (houses) or the nearest and dearest.

The results made us to ponder. It seemed to us that the indicators of our children's pictures were going to be more patriotically oriented. However, it was noteworthy that the young Russian citizens addressed to not only the exterior part of patriotism (the parades, national flag, etc.) but also the moral and profound part of it: their families, homeland, and native nature.

5. Research Methods

It is obvious that quantity index is not the most important in this research. Patriotism is usually related to higher social feelings. However, is the child ready to comprehend and apprehend such a high spiritual matter? For example, what may the expression "to instil family values and values of motherland in children" mean? Values are special, extremely abstract categories being forming throughout the whole people's lives, whereas preschool children's thinking is practical and visual that seeks attachment to the object. Taking into account this fact, the aim to inculcate values turns out to be excessive for the preschool age. Consequently, this task should be corrected, considering age peculiarities of preschool children.

In this case, one should pay the attention to children's perception and fixation on those indicators connected to patriotism. We can find the confirmation of this method in the works by L.S. Vygotsky who notes analyzing sign operations in the child: "higher mental functions are primarily built as external forms of behaviour and based on external sign. In other words, in the framework of our study, it is these patriotism-related indicators that may act as the very sign, which is going to become initially external and then an internalized link for the formation of patriotic feelings and relations. This is that what the scientist writes about: "the process of implanting cultural forms of behaviour ... is connected to the fundamental changes in the essential mental functions accompanied by the rearrangement of mental activity on the basis of sign operations" (Vygotsky, 2000).

6. Findings

Summarizing, according to L.S. Vygotsky, the state symbols, socially important objects, folk handmade crafts, etc. may be referred to patriotism-related indicators, that is, external signs (Vygotsky, 2000). But, such single-time address to these indicators does not give any efficient results. For a pre-school child, the process of "implanting", or internalization, is directly connected to emotional experience, corresponding actions, ability to realize, accept and share this experience with parents, peers and relevant adults.

It is necessary to acquaint a child with national symbols such as the flag, the State Emblem, the Red Square, the Spasskaya Tower, the map of Russia, etc. However, it is not only about demonstration and tales, but it is necessary to let children paint the map of Russia, pave the way from their town to the capital of Russia on it (mapping this rout with the Russian tricolour), find out why the Red Square is called so, and suggest to name places in your town in the same way.

One may suggest to make up a number of informative routes in native land for guests, for example, “Open Yugra”, “When Russia is spoken about, I think about Ural”, etc. and then to present them as slide decks, “live journals”, involving parents and kindergarten staff (librarians, museum workers, etc.)

We can also turn the samovar into a patriotic indicator by organizing a series of meetings called “Visiting Samovar Samovarych” to discuss about the samovar, its native land, for instance. The famous Russian hospitality, Russian pancakes (tasting is obligatory) and traditional games (play together with parents) can be discussed.

On our part, we have prepared a series of lessons assigned to introduce sights of birthplaces to children. The regional special-purpose programme named “Sides of the Urals” is elaborated to develop axiological attitude to the native region in preschool children by Department of pedagogy and psychology of childhood of Ural State Pedagogical University, Ekaterinburg. Children get acquainted with the following cultural monuments of Ekaterinburg and the Sverdlovsk Region: the Leaning tower of Nevyansk (it is also compared with the Leaning Tower of Pisa), the Ekaterinburg Museum of Fine Arts with The Kasli Cast-Iron Pavilion in its centre (registered in the UNESCO catalogue), the monument to A.S. Popov, the Russian physicist and one of the inventors of the radio, the P.P. Bazhov’s Memorial House, who glorified his land with original tales, etc. Such immersion is supposed to teach children to respect cultural heritage created by other people, to conceive their own city as special in the culture of the whole Russian country, etc. There are more than ten such educational routes already. For instance, there are “The Ural Rowan”, “Keys to the Ural Health”, “The Copper Mountain Wealth” etc (Korotaeva & Belousova 2017; Korotaeva, Belousova & Qin He, 2017).

Under conditions of this continual, unusual and interesting work, there is an integration of positive emotions experienced by children with patriotism-related indicators. Children’s interest develops and allows engaging in both individual actions and socially important activities: participation in Town Day, the Immortal Regiment march, collection of toys for children from orphanages, etc.

7. Conclusion

During our study we have come to the following conclusions.

Patriotism is usually considered as a basic part of people’s national self-consciousness. It is expressed in love and devotion to Fatherland, their history, culture, traditions and life as well as acceptance of self-value to readiness for defence. It is in childhood when attitudes form influencing social development of the individual: attitude to the place of residence, motherland, surrounding people, the closest community, oneself as a part of this community, etc.

Our research has enhanced the understanding of the present patriotic education field. The investigation shows that there is a lack of certain images, particular indicators which would connect some children’s ideas with the motherland image. Such patriotic indicators might be not only the national flag, the State Emblem, the capital of our country but also the Red Square, the map of Russia, even the samovar, matryoshka doll, etc. At that, those indicators should not be only represented or marked but the base of children’s cognitive activities.

This will encourage children to find out more about their motherland. In this case, it relies on positive emotions and interest that makes the process of patriotic education easier for a child and more effective in the format of teaching activities.

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