

SCTCMG 2018
**International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural
Transformations in the Context of Modern Globalism»**

**NURTURING POLYCULTURAL PERSONALITY OF AN
ELEMENTARY STUDENT IN POLYETHNIC EDUCATIONAL
MEDIUM**

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Abstract

The paper discusses the problem of nurturing polycultural personality of a young pupil in polyethnic education medium, its importance for preservation of panhuman and national values. The scientific novelty is in using the definition of the principle of polycultural personality to reveal its structure, communication tolerance, social empathy, conflict tolerance, humanity and emotional stability. The work substantiates the education system to be the leading factor to preserve and develop national cultures and languages, suitable tool for cultural and political integration of the Russian society. The researchers are focused on studying the polyethnic educational medium of elementary school and its structural components: spacial-subject, information-technological, psychological-pedagogical, didactical. The experiment is supplemented by expert evaluation aimed at investigating the emotional indicators of elementary students. The article includes summarized data testifying the efficacy of the developed technology, which expresses as positive dynamics in terms of all selected structural components of the polycultural personality: social empathy, conflict tolerance, humanity and emotional stability. It is also noted that this process is unfinished and requires constant efforts on nurturing the selected qualities of a polycultural personality. The authors consider the nurturing of a polycultural personality as a dominating condition for accepting the national identity, development of motivation, value-conscious, cognitive, communication and behavioral directives for interaction with representatives of other ethnic groups. The conclusion explains the necessity of focused work on nurturing a polycultural personality of elementary students in polyethnic educational medium.

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Keywords: Nurturing, polycultural personality, elementary student, polyethnic medium, educational medium, subject-subject interaction.



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1. Introduction

The core problem of modern Russian pedagogy is preservation of panhuman and national values. The education faces the problems of provision and facilitation of general civil identification of a person and subsequent preservation of national identity and personal uniqueness.

The events of the present millennium in the world and in Russia have stipulated qualitative alteration of the social dynamics. Crisis in the system of international relations is characteristic for both world's society and Russian nation. This makes urgent the problem of determining and creating conditions for the development of polyethnic interaction with representatives of different cultures and national traditions, and for the solution of problems of polycultural education and nurturing as the most important means for building all-round, spiritually rich person (Bessarabova, 2015; Kozhurova & Zateeva, 2017).

To solve these problems, the following ideas are suggested by the authors of numerous theoretical and experimental studies: formation of skills for interpersonal interaction in polycultural medium, development of tolerant cultural pluralism. In addition, an important role is played by the ethnical identification with the people, formation of national pride and respect to ancestors (Suprunova, 2014).

The formation of multinational Russian civilization through the development of spiritual sovereignty and polycultural personal traits is provided by the education system. The relevance of the study is conditioned by the striving of the society to harmonic interethnic relations between different ethnic groups at the stages of early socialization with preservation of the whole range of national cultures and national identity of every people's representative.

The polycultural approach in education has substantial nurturant potential in this context. Its implementation allows the contemporary general education system, striving to build civilized and humane relations, to create conditions for nurturing a polycultural personality, inbreeding in the rising generation of tolerant attitude towards other peoples and accustom the generation to understanding of the world's culture and panhuman values through the comprehension of their own culture and that of adjoining peoples.

The solution of these problems should begin in elementary school, because in this age children are the most susceptible to acquisition of polyethnic cultural experience, formation of national self-awareness, mechanisms of ethnos-uniting and ethnos-differentiating understanding, and reflective attitude to relative and foreign ethnic groups (Bessarabova, 2015; Bromley, 1990; Kozhurova & Zateeva, 2017). It is the age of intense development and qualitative transformation of personality, formation of motives for cultural activity, development of cognitive processes, assimilation of social and ethical standards. Children of this age are open, natural and spontaneous, which is beneficial for the development of polyethnic culture as a form of environment cognition and way of self-expression (Asmolov, 2001; Bromley, 1990).

Sociological studies tell that starting from late preschool and early school age children become susceptible to the ethnic factor. They start to ask questions about their appearance, behavior and speech. It is the age when the foundation of polycultural personality should be laid. The children of early school age have relatively conscious attitude to their people, national community, while the age of 6-10 years is considered as the most active stage of nurture of polycultural personality in the conditions of interethnic interaction. (Bromley, 1990; Mukhina, 1985; Snezhkova, 2012).

The understanding of elementary students of self national identity and ethnical richness of the world is not typically accompanied by ethnical conflicts. The differentiation of others into “us” and “them” in terms of nationality occurs later in pubertal age.

M.V. Danilova and Z.T. Gasanov after the analysis of international relation among teenagers states that this age is associated with low and below-average level of acceptance of others, as well as average and low level of ethnical tolerance (Danilova, 2013). Similarly, I.N. Denisova using her study results states that it is the pubertal age when interpersonal and interethnical conflicts connected with international problems start to appear (Denisova, 2003). Obviously, the preventive work is required in the very early school age aimed at prevention of ethnical intolerance in education medium

2. Problem Statement

General issues of the formation of ethnocultural relations, civil and national identity of Russian people were comprehensively studied by politicians, sociologists, philosophers, public men (Asaliev, 2013; Bessarabova, 2015; Dmitriev, 1999). The analysis of philosophical, sociological, psychological and pedagogical literature tells that extensive material was accumulated that characterizes the studies of national mindset and its thoughtful characteristics (Abulxhanova, 1991; Malkova, 2013).

At the turn of the XX century, monographs and dissertations appeared devoted to the problems of transforming national self-awareness, exchange of cultural wealth, interethnical relations (Babunova & Goncharova, 2010; Batelaan, 2002; Belogurov, 2012). A particular place in the study of ethnos, development of multinational teams and polycultural society is held by ethnopedagogical works devoted to the culture of international interaction, adaptation to the conditions of new geopolitical reality and polyethnical communication. (Berezhnova, Nabok, & Shcheglov, 2013; Bessarabova, 2015; Volkov, 2006; Dzhurinskiy, 2008). There are important works of Russian and international researchers unveiling the essence of psychological and pedagogical support of developing ethnocultural personal qualities at different stages of ontogenesis and ethnogenesis (Asmolov, 2001; Dzhurinskiy, 2008; Kozhurova & Zateeva, 2017; Rean, 1999).

This problem was covered in international concepts of multicultural, intercultural (Batelaan, 2002) and global education. A particular place is held by pedagogical studies of leading international specialists on comparative pedagogics (Sleeter, 1996; Bray, Adamson, & Mason, 2007) discovering the problems of ethnopedagogical approaches to personality development.

Despite modern psychological and pedagogical literature widely cover the problems of nurturing a polycultural personality, there are unsolved problems. In particular, remains understudied the problem of nurturing polycultural traits in elementary students in polyethnical educational medium which are the basis for polycultural personality establishment. The survey of ways to resolve the controversy between existing pedagogical experience of polycultural nurturing of students / rising generation and absence of practically oriented technologies for nurturing polycultural personality of elementary students in polyethnical educational medium allowed formulating the problem of the investigation connected with the search of the answer to the question “What are the theoretical and methodological principles for nurturing polycultural personality of a young pupil in polyethnical educational medium?”

3. Research Questions

The object of the investigation is a complex of educational conditions, means and methods for nurturing polycultural personality of a young pupil in polyethnic educational medium.

4. Purpose of the Study

The aim of the investigation is a theoretical justification and experimental improvement of technologies for nurturing polycultural personality of a young pupil in polyethnic educational medium.

5. Research Methods

The studies were organized and performed using the following methods: expert evaluations, observations, test “Index of tolerance”, talks, incomplete-sentence test, sociometric method of D. Moreno (Moreno, 1951), method for studying value-orientation unity in a class, projective techniques: self portrait, picture of my friends, compositions.

The technology includes the following forms and methods for activating the cognitive work: mixed education, project method, game technologies, problem-based learning and other. The choice of the most effective of them depends on the direction and specific character of activities in which the traits of polycultural personality should manifest. The diagnostics of the level of the traits of polycultural personality was made on the basis of criteria-oriented approach that enables clearer estimation and evaluation of the traits under study. To compare the percentage of the indicators to determine the levels of importance of difference between the percentages, ϕ -criterion of Fischer angular transformation according to the technique presented in the work of E.V. Sidorenko (Sidorenko, 2017).

6. Findings

The experimental work on nurturing a polycultural personality of elementary students in polyethnic educational medium was performed in a private school of Pyatigorsk from 2013 until 2017. The experiment involved 120 elementary students. The experiment took place in natural conditions of the educational process.

The experiment included two groups: reference and experimental. At the initial stage, the level of nurtured specified traits of polycultural personality in both classes was of no statistically remarkable difference ($P > 0.05$), which allowed randomly choosing the reference and experimental groups. The experiment did not disturb the natural educational process. In the reference group, the education process was traditional and had no target focus on specific conditions for building nurturant environment, while in the experimental group a technology was implemented to nurture polycultural personality of an elementary student. In the experimental group, a special work was carried out to nurture polycultural personality of elementary students. The most effective forms and methods for organizing lessons and educational activities were distinguished that are aimed at achieving the stated goal. The summative investigation stage envisaged the development and selection of experimental methods and special techniques adequate for the stated investigation problems. At the initial experiment state, the respondents of the reference and experimental groups were evaluated for the level of nurtured traits of polycultural personality.

It was determined by the matrices given to students with a set of questions and answers corresponding the structural components and criterial indicators of polycultural personality. The task for the students was to determine the ranks of the most and the least important traits (scored from 1 to 10). The essence of each indicator reflecting the most important personality traits were preliminarily discussed with the children. The students were offered to order the traits in descending order in terms of their import. The results revealed low level of criterial indicators of polycultural personality and disconformity between proper and actual quality of the nurturing level of polycultural personality in the school. Such situation has necessitated the development of a technology to nurture polycultural personality of a young pupil in polyethnic educational medium.

Table 1 presents the results of studied level of formed polycultural personality traits.

Table 01. Results of studied level of formed polycultural personality traits

Polycultural personality traits	Criteria	Average rank
Communication tolerance	Wide polyethnical social circle	2.50
	Following positive communication norms with people of different nationalities	1.84
	Cooperative activities with children of different nationalities; readiness to listen to the talker and hold a dialog	1.84
Social empathy	Recognition of values of other ethnic groups	2.63
	Respect and interest to the partner's communication language	2.50
	Understanding of the essence of interethnic world and concord, cultural richness of the country and world	2.57
	Positive relation and respect to communication partner, calling them by name	2.28
Conflict tolerance	Paying respect to the representatives of other ethnic groups	2.29
	Readiness to recognize the existence of other points of view and right of each person to have one	2.55
	Prevention and elimination of conflicts on the basis of ethnocultural controversies	2.00
	Readiness to present own opinion and rationalize own point of view and estimation of events	2.55
Humanity	Being humane to people and nature	2.57
	Realization of humane and democratic system of values	2.20
	Readiness to positive perception and comprehension of life of surrounding community	1.09
Emotional stability	Respect to own national identity and identity of other people	2.76
	Readiness to overcome complications in relations with representatives of other ethnical groups	2.55
	Capability to follow main traditions and customs stated by community	2.09

In the pedagogical experiment, four groups of task were to be solved:

- the first group is aimed at the development of motivation and value-conscious personality trait. It was orienting a teacher to develop national identity, respect to other's identity, empathy, friendliness, tolerance, significance of other ethnic group. The experiment was oriented on the first social circle consisting of a number of the most close classmates, facilitation of a student in finding friends and acceptance of cultural traditions of a friend and their family, regardless of ethnocultural attitude, living traditions and conditions, confession peculiarities;

- the second group envisioned the development of cognitive interest to polycultural competence of an elementary student, activation of knowledge, skills, cognitive mechanisms to accept cultural heritage of different nationalities of students in elementary school;
- the third group was aimed at the development of communication traits, communication culture and positive interpersonal relations of classmates;
- the fourth group was focused on the development of behavioral and activity spheres of personality, support, cooperation with agemates, adults and representatives of other nationalities, overcoming of factors traumatizing other person, assistance to each other in solving collisions.

The target points of the technology are conditioned by the following characteristics of polyethnical educational medium: object-developing, didactic, information-technological and psychological-pedagogical. Besides, the technology is oriented on the development of subject position of a student actively interacting with the community. Let us specify the main content characteristics of the technology for nurturing the polycultural personality of an elementary student.

The goal is to nurture the polycultural personality of an elementary student through the development of subjective positions and subject-to-subject interaction with representatives of other ethnic groups. The subjective position of an elementary student assumes the formation of own national identity. The subject-to-subject interaction in polyethnical educational medium provides the acceptance of national identity of classmates, development of motivation, value-conscious, cognitive, communication and behavioral directives for interaction with representatives of other ethnic groups.

The technology for nurturing the polycultural personality of an elementary student is conditioned by the principles giving a new sense to further work: activity, subjectiveness, humanity, account of personality and ontogenetic peculiarities of students.

Activity principle is aimed at the cooperation and involvement of all elementary student in the work. This principle means their attraction to the interaction with the children team members in terms of frontal, group and individual interaction. In addition, this principle envisions active involvement of parents into the pedagogical interaction.

Principle of subject-to-subject interaction envisages the involvement of teachers and parents in the student work in terms of equal-right partnership, non-judgemental acceptance and respect to ethnocultural peculiarities of each family and person. The implementation of this principle creates the atmosphere of trust, safety, openness, respectfulness, mutual emotional experience, cooperation and interaction of parents, children and teachers. The principle of subjectiveness orients teachers to account age and individual peculiarities of children, their ontogenetic peculiarities.

Humanistic principle allows correcting the work content, objectify personal resources and capabilities of each student. Moreover, according to this principle, each technology implementation stage is connected with the content of previous stage.

Principle of personal activity approach assumes the nurturing of the polycultural personality of an elementary student through their inclusion into different types of cooperative activities with children of other nationalities, recognition of inherent value of each person, representative of specific ethnic group, respect to traditions and culture of ethnic communities.

Principle of ontogenetic approach means reliance on age and individual peculiarities of an elementary student. The goals, tasks and principles determine the strategy of the main stages. Conditionally, four technology stages are distinguished. They are: preparation, development, activity and reflection-assessment.

Preparation means formulation of the work aim and substantiation of anticipated deliverables of educational activities. The solution of ethnocultural problems in school cannot be done separately from the family. In this connection, in the social and pedagogical relations both students and their parents were involved. The teachers wanted them to feel as subjects of the whole structure of school community, active partners of collaborative pedagogical activities with teachers. It is interaction with parents which enables the discussion of the principles of polycultural nurturing in the family, feedback and formation of new perspective of student “entering” the polyethnic micromedium of school and macromedium of the region providing the family with favorable social environment. This stage facilitated the development of reflection and empathy in the children community.

At the development stage the knowledge of other ethnic groups was formed, on the peculiarities of their living culture, traditions, interests, achievements, most prominent representatives, heroes, poets, writers, scientists. This is the stage where the students understood the ethnic group boundaries, specificity of national applied and academic art, achievements of the representatives in science, technology, defense of fatherland. This stage is crucial for cognitive development of a child and nurturing of polycultural personality. In addition, on this stage, the social partnership enhanced between the family and the school.

At the activity stage the teachers engaged the students in active creative projects through participation in celebrations, competitions and festivals. This stage allowed distinguishing the potential and talents of the students, provided the appearance of promising directions in community development. This allowed to determine the happy perspective of collaborative creative works, increase the communication intensity aimed at the solution of specified problems. The social circle included not only the students and teachers. Parents were also the engaged subjects of the communication.

The final stage was *reflection-assessment stage*. The efficacy of the nurturing of the polycultural personality of an elementary student was determined by the students, teachers and parents. The reflection content depended on the acceptance of group values, development of motivational position, improvement of activities and business communications allowing achieving a specific result. The formation of reflection in elementary students is still in process and largely depends on the development of analytic and synthetic mental functions. It facilitates re-thinking of the experience received. The result of active interaction of a student with medium and mates is polycultural competence. In this connection, the implementation of the technology has distinguished a range of competences which were digested by the students and mastered at the final stage.

The studies performed after the implementation of each experimental stage allowed determining the dynamics of formation levels of polycultural personality traits in elementary students. We have determined the levels using previously specified criteria where every indicator was considered through the system of factors. The presence of the majority of the factors testify high level of manners, their negligible part testifies average level, and only several of them testify low level. At the end of each school year, the level of formation of every polycultural personality trait was assessed. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 02. Results of studied level of formed polycultural personality traits

Levels	Group	Communication tolerance			
		1 class	2 class	3 class	4 class
High level	Reference group (n=30)	3.3%	6.6%	13.3%	26.6%
	Experimental group (n=30)	0%	16.6%	20.0%	63.3%
	Reliability of difference	$P>0.05$	$P<0.05$	$P<0.1$	$P<0.05$
Average level	Reference group (n=30)	13.3%	20.0%	30.0%	33.3%
	Experimental group (n=30)	16.6%	23.3%	33.3%	33.3%
	Reliability of difference	$P>0.05$	$P>0.05$	$P>0.05$	$P>0.05$
Low level	Reference group (n=30)	83.4%	73.4%	56.7%	40.1%
	Experimental group (n=30)	83.3%	60.0%	46.6%	3.3%
	Reliability of difference	$P>0.05$	$P<0.05$	$P<0.05$	$P<0.05$
Social empathy					
High level	Reference group (n=30)	6.6%	16.6%	23.3%	30.0%
	Experimental group (n=30)	16.6%	26.6%	33.3%	43.3%
	Reliability of difference	$P>0.05$	$P<0.05$	$P<0.05$	$P<0.05$
Average level	Reference group (n=30)	6.6%	16.6%	23.3%	23.3%
	Experimental group (n=30)	13.3%	26.6%	26.6%	33.3%
	Reliability of difference	$P>0.05$	$P<0.05$	$P>0.05$	$P<0.05$
Low level	Reference group (n=30)	86.8%	76.8%	53.4%	46.7%
	Experimental group (n=30)	70.1%	46.8%	40.1%	23.4%
	Reliability of difference	$P>0.05$	$P<0.05$	$P<0.05$	$P<0.05$
	Experimental group (n=30)	83.3%	30.0%	23.3%	0%
	Reliability of difference	$P>0.05$	$P<0.05$	$P<0.05$	$P<0.05$

Conflict tolerance					
High level	Reference group (n=30)	10.0%	16.6%	23.3%	33.3%
	Experimental group (n=30)	13.3%	30.0%	50.0%	76.6%
	Reliability of difference	$P>0.05$	$P<0.05$	$P<0.05$	$P<0.05$
Average level	Reference group (n=30)	6.6%	13.3%	20.0%	16.6%
	Experimental group (n=30)	20.0%	26.6%	30.0%	13.3%
	Reliability of difference	$P<0.05$	$P<0.05$	$P>0.05$	$P<0.05$
Low level	Reference group (n=30)	83.4%	70.1%	56.7%	50.1%
	Experimental group (n=30)	66.7%	43.4%	20.0%	10.1%
	Reliability of difference	$P<0.05$	$P<0.05$	$P<0.05$	$P<0.05$
Humanity					
High level	Reference group (n=30)	13.3%	20.0%	20.0%	33.3%
	Experimental group (n=30)	16.6%	16.6%	30.0%	60.0%
	Reliability of difference	$P>0.05$	$P>0.05$	$P<0.05$	$P<0.05$
Average level	Reference group (n=30)	16.6%	16.6%	20.0%	30.0%
	Experimental group (n=30)	16.6%	16.6%	23.3%	36.6%
	Reliability of difference	$P>0.05$	$P>0.05$	$P>0.05$	$P>0.05$
Low level	Reference group (n=30)	70%	63.3%	60.0%	36.7%
	Experimental group (n=30)	66.6%	66.6%	46.6%	3.3%
	Reliability of difference	$P>0.05$	$P>0.05$	$P<0.05$	$P<0.05$
Emotional stability					
High level	Reference group (n=30)	3.3%	10.0%	16.6%	33.3%
	Experimental group (n=30)	6.6%	43.3%	66.6%	66.6%
	Reliability of difference	$P>0.05$	$P<0.05$	$P<0.05$	$P<0.05$
Average level	Reference group (n=30)	10.0%	6.6%	13.3%	40.0%
	Experimental group (n=30)	10.0%	26.6%	10.0%	33.3%
	Reliability of difference	$P>0.05$	$P>0.05$	$P>0.05$	$P>0.05$
Low level	Reference group (n=30)	86.6%	83.3%	70.0%	26.6%

7. Conclusion

The summarized empirical characteristic of traits of the polycultural personality of an elementary student allowed confirming the validity of the concept. It manifested in segmentary perception of national identity at the first stages of the experiment and cohesive perception of polycultural achievements of different peoples by the end of the experiment. The structure of the polyethnic educational medium of an elementary school, consisting of particularly developing, infotechnological, didactic, psychological and pedagogical components, after the experiment has become an effective base for the formation of polycultural personality traits.

The investigation allows stating that the structural components and criterial indicators of polycultural personality are: communication tolerance (wide polyethnic social circle, following positive communication norms with people of different nationalities, collaborative activities with children of different nationality, readiness to listen to the talker and hold a dialog); social empathy (recognition of values of other ethnic groups, respect and interest to the partner's communication language, understanding of the essence of interethnic world and concord, cultural richness of the country and world, positive relation and respect to communication partner, calling them by name); conflict tolerance (paying respect to the representatives of other ethnic groups, readiness to recognize the existence of other points of view and right of each person to have one, readiness to present own opinion and rationalize own point of view and estimation of events, prevention and elimination of conflicts on the basis of ethnocultural controversies); humanity (being humane to people and nature, realization of humane and democratic system of values, readiness to positive perception and comprehension of life of surrounding community); emotional stability (respect to own national identity and identity of other people, capability to follow main traditions and customs stated by community, readiness to overcome complications in relations with representatives of other ethnic groups).

The developed original technology provides the effective nurturing of the polycultural personality of an elementary student and is represented by the sequence of preparatory, development, activity and reflection-assessment stages aimed at the development of motivation and value-conscious, cognitive and communication-behavioral spheres in the student's personality structure. It describes the education process assuming sequential solution of goal-setting problems, development of the system of ethnocultural knowledge and motivation of polycultural interaction, design and implementation of polycultural interaction, reflection and result assessment.

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