

STUDENTS' SELF-DEVELOPMENT IN POLYCULTURAL CONTEXT

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Abstract

Sources of scientific understanding of the problem of self-development of a person were at all times one of the central problems of investigations. Similar position is natural as there always were and will be topical and actual the questions of formation of a person capable of constant self-perfection in any vital, cultural, economic, social, political and other circumstances. And in this case value and an urgency of the question of development, inculcation and progression of the abilities for self-development in any country are indisputable.

At the same time global multiethnic issues keep going more and more problematic, complex and contradictive because of the lack of peoples' inner tolerance to multicultural (polycultural) context. The severity of the modern inter-ethnic conflicts is determined by the combination of many factors, such as: the destruction of the socio-economic, political and ideological relationships; conflicts between countries; ignoring of confessional and national ideals, values and attitudes; migration problems and other situations. Under these conditions the actuality and the significance of national cultural attitudes, valuable-symbolic aspects of national societal existence, the specific characteristics of ethnic groups are altogether essentially increased. So nowadays, the studies dedicated to the issue of multiculturalism and multi-ethnic population and the effectiveness of the interaction between different people have become an extremely important as this can help save the global integrity. In this dimension our work presents the analysis of the existing theories dedicated to the acculturation as a crucial part of multicultural (polycultural) identification and the analysis of the structure of students' self-development in the polycultural context.

Keywords: self-development, multiculturalism, polycultural context, tolerance, students, culture.

1 INTRODUCTION

The process of person's self-development is a complex one as it integrates a great variety of interconnected spheres and directions. Many scholars investigate this problem but still there is no common viewpoint and common definition of this phenomenon. Mostly scientists do agree that this process is crucial and permanent, that there exist a vast amount of ways for the organization of this process both for the personal

and for the professional states. Self-development as a process depends on many determinative components as the biological (behavioral), social (contextual), psychological, political, economic and many others. Polycultural context is rather newly investigated as an environment of self-development and it is becoming more and more significant in the researching of many humanity-wide problems. This is the most important problem of contemporary society because of the numerous contradictive and conflictive situations worldwide. Polycultural context according to the Post-Soviet researchers is defined similar and synonymous to the multicultural context, but scientists from European countries determine these terms as different ones, as follows: *Multiculturalism* - draws attention to the fact that individuals are faced with the task of living with diversity and having to incorporate different cultural orientations and group identifications in their sense of self (K. Deaux and M. Verkuyten, 2014) and *Polyculturalism* highlights the historic common roots of all cultures (Schwartz & West-Pavlov, 2007). We consider polycultural context as a more suitable term and propose the definition as the integrative vision of this problem as we see it in the coordinating dimension: we suppose that historical correlation of originally common different cultures with their historical similarities and contemporary wealthy variations should become a basis and a scene for the effective incorporation that will bring the unity and tolerant-empathic integrity of the representatives of all cultures.

2. THE MAIN RESEARCH

In this study there was made an attempt to revise the contemporary scientific state in the field of students' self-development in polycultural context. The problems of acculturation together with the problems of intercultural interactions are both integrated in this problem and stand as the components of the self-development in polycultural context.

2.1 The definition for the self-development

Different definitions of this phenomenon present us the complexity and the significance of this issue for any human-being. We usually have no ideas and clues on what can matter when we need and come to the question of self-development, but there does not exist any hesitation in the meaningfulness of this process overall.

The problem of self-development raised by ancient philosophers long ago, and the essence of self-development process appeared in different philosophical systems as a spiritual and practical activities aimed at upgrading the inner self and obtaining a high adaptation and subject-transformative abilities, at spiritual self-uprising and other inner progressive processes development.

While investigating this problem we distinguished lots of definitions of the self-development phenomenon and here we provide the most prominent of them:

1. The process of initiation to the culture of own society and age, the constant improvement of the level of knowledge in the process of lifelong learning, the replenishment with new knowledge and, finally, the process of active implementation of selves in life, work and creation processes (Abulkhanova-Slavskaya, 1991).
2. Conscious continuous spiritual-practical activity aimed at understanding of own physical condition, revealing of the existing contradictions between the real and desired levels according to the image strategy and the life-style, fixation of the subjective experience of relationships and interactions (Fedorov. 2003).
3. The conscious process of personal formation for the purpose of effective self-actualization on the basis of internal significant aspirations and external influences (Sharshov, 2005).
4. The fundamental ability of a person to become and to be a genuine subject of the education and development of own personal and professional capacities, the ability to turn life into a subject of practical self-improvement (Pidkasistyj and Mizharikiov, 2010).

These definitions proclaim us the "action-reaction" principle of this process as both inner or outer it mostly caused by the collision and through the reactive activeness of an individuum this process becomes progressive and brings developmental value.

2.2 The interpretation of the process of students' self-development in the polycultural context (theories and components)

Polycultural context makes the self-development process more complex as it provides personality with more complicated stimulus. Personal self-development in polycultural context integrates supplementary

components such as complex acculturation process (in the context enriched by the variety of cultures) and intercultural interaction (with the representatives of various cultures). At the same time it is obvious that the ability for the self-development in polycultural context should be the prioritized one and it should be developed in the polycultural person.

When we come across with the problem of acculturation we may face with the problems of differences in the pictures of the world of each culture representatives and with the variety of languages they speak. In such situation there may arise some social problems like intolerant attitudes and even conflicts because of these differences. In order to anticipate them there should exist a common practice. It should be based on the development and self-development of personal tolerance and empathy. This kind of work should be integrated into the educational process and students while they study at educational institutions should acquire and develop these qualities.

Theories concerning the multiculturalism were created and researched by many scientists and there exist different models concerning it. As we mentioned previously we directly interrelate the concepts of polyculturalism and multiculturalism and suppose these models coincide for both. Here we present two of the existing many and suppose these are the most suitable and universal ones:

Model name	Model structure
The Multicultural personality Ramirez's Mestizo Multicultural Personality and Cultural Flex Model	<p>Individuals with high levels of multicultural personality development exhibit a multicultural orientation to life, which is characterized by five key elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. strive for self-actualization through cross-cultural interaction and worldview expansion; 2. enjoy cultural learning through travel and study, and actively seek novel cross-cultural interactions; 3. demonstrate cognitive flexibility in adapting to changing educational, work, and community contexts; 4. are creative and cognitively flexible in solving group conflict, exhibit high levels of emotional and social intelligence, and have developed varied modes for coping with stress; and 5. can step back and examine their own biases, are committed to serving as local community and world citizens, and are socially active in speaking out against oppression in its varied forms. (Ramirez, 1999)
Van der Zee and van Oudenhoven's Multicultural Personality, Success-Based Model	<p>Scientists settled on five moderately correlated traits (or factors) that comprise the core of their theory:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Cultural Empathy</i> – the ability to empathize with the feelings, thoughts, and behaviours of individuals from a different cultural background; 2. <i>Openmindedness</i> – an open and unprejudiced attitude toward different groups and toward different cultural norms and values; 3. <i>Emotional Stability</i> – the tendency to remain calm in stressful situations; 4. <i>Social Initiative</i> – tendency to approach social situations in an active way and to take initiatives; 5. <i>Flexibility</i> – the tendency to regard new and unknown situations as a challenge and to adjust one's behaviour to the demands of new and unknown situations. (van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2001, pp. 286-287)

As it can be seen from both models the aspect of self-development is presented in each of them, for instance:

1. *Strive for self-actualization through cross-cultural interaction and worldview expansion* – in The Multicultural personality Ramirez's Mestizo Multicultural Personality and Cultural Flex Model; and
2. *Flexibility – the tendency to regard new and unknown situations as a challenge and to adjust one's behaviour to the demands of new and unknown situations.* – in Van der Zee and van Oudenhoven's Multicultural Personality, Success-Based Model.

This fact underlines the significance of this aspect in each theoretical and practical scientific work and presents the evidence of its importance. Polycultural context requires the ability for self-development and it is impossible to educate and develop polycultural (multicultural) person without self-developmental component.

CONCLUSION

The contemporary reality requires much more social integrity and in the polycultural world everyone should be able to integrate and interrelate with other people representing other cultures. In this situation no one can stay away and everyone should be empathetic, flexible and tolerant enough to be able to live constructively and creatively in peaceful environment. The solution of this task is to understand its importance and to generate common polycultural self-developing practices for educational process in all institutions.

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