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Values-Based and Culture-Congruent Teacher Training

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Abstract

The aim of the study is to analyze the values-based and culture-congruent teacher training. The importance of this analysis is determined by the fact that poly-cultural society is a complex system formed by the interaction of different subjects which should identify themselves not only with their own cultures, but also with the culture of society as a whole system. It follows, that to be in accordance with culture of poly-cultural society pedagogy should embody the dialectic of individual and general features of many cultures. On the one hand, teacher training, which is consistent with culture, should support, develop, literally – cultivate individual, special, unique qualities of a person, since culture as a specific way of life characterizes its subject as different from all other subjects of culture. On the other hand, to be in accordance with culture of poly-cultural society pedagogy should be based on a strict distinction between what is consistent with universal human culture, what unites people, makes them representatives of a single human race or a particular society as a whole system, and what is incompatible with culture as such in principle, never, under any circumstances. Culture-congruent teacher training will be able to solve the problem of organic unity of individual and general features in the formation of socio-cultural qualities of students only if the theoretical, methodological and methodical basis of training is the concept of fundamental values of Truth, Good and Beauty as universal senses of human existence embodied in the infinite variety of cultures.

Keywords: culture, teacher training, poly-cultural society, values, value orientations.

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Introduction

Poly-cultural society is a complex system formed by the interaction of different subjects which should identify themselves not only with their own cultures, but also with the culture of society as a whole system.

One of the contradictions of modern poly-cultural society is that intensive interactions and integration of various cultural subjects within new socio-cultural communities are accompanied by no less intense self-identification of all interacting subjects as autonomous, self-sufficient and unique.

This contradiction expresses the essence of a normally developing poly-cultural society to the extent that it is a function of the multiplicity of cultural subjects actually existing in a given society and carrying out a steady exchange of activities among themselves. Ultimately, the existence of poly-cultural society is possible only if there is a real plurality of cultural subjects that are aware of and maintain their identity, or identity to themselves. The diversity of cultural manifestations of a subject of any level of organization: society, ethnos, social group or individual – cannot cross the border of self-identity of the subject of culture, because, losing its identity, this subject turns into another.

That is why a concern of cultural subjects for the preservation and consolidation of their identity is quite justified. And the more justified that in conditions of inevitable globalization and unification of all aspects of life in the aggressive environment of a consumer society a self-identification of young generation too often turns out to be not a form of self-awareness and a mechanism of internalization of cultural norms and patterns of their ancestors, but the most effective means of achieving short-term material well-being. Such self-identification practically destroys the very possibility of turning young people into carriers of the culture of the older generation and thus destroys the autonomy and identity of the culture which the older generation is the subject of.

At the same time, the self-identification as unique and autonomous cultural subjects can become an insurmountable obstacle to intercultural dialogue, which is possible only when different subjects identify others as subjects similar to them and themselves – as subjects similar to others. All actual contradictions and difficulties of intercultural dialogue arise and exist not so much because others do not recognize our identity (ethnic, professional, religious, etc.), but since others do not identify us as similar to them beings. This happens because the reality of socio-cultural differences between individuals, social groups and communities is absolutely obvious at the level of common sense and does not require any special means and methods for its detection. On the contrary, general, and even more so – universal features of the human way of life are hidden under layers of various differences and are not the object of direct perception.

Each social institution forms an identity of a limited type, since it transforms a social being from a representative of the human race into a representative of a very specific social community: an ethnos, a class, a family, a professional group, etc. – and requires the interiorization of the main features and patterns of behavior of various, but not universal, cultural subjects. At the same time, the cultivation of any differences, if not destroys, then makes common features of cultures almost invisible, and, consequently, prevents the establishment of dialogical, partnership relations between people. On the contrary, the need for communication and joint life activity becomes the basis for self-identification of various cultural subjects as representatives of a universal human culture. This kind of universal identity exists as a moment of identity of different subjects and is perceived by them as a metaidentity.

It follows, that on the one hand, culture-congruent teacher training should support, develop, literally – cultivate – individual, special, unique qualities of a person, because culture as a specific way of life characterizes its subject as different from all other subjects of culture. On the other hand, to be in accordance with culture of poly-cultural society teacher training should be based on a strict distinction between what is consistent with universal human culture, what unites people, makes them representatives of a single human race or a particular society as a whole system, and what is incompatible with culture as such in principle, never, under any circumstances.

Purpose and objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to argue that culture congruent teacher training will be able to solve the problem of organic unity of individual and general features in formation of socio-cultural qualities of students only if the theoretical, methodological and methodical basis of training is the concept of fundamental values of Truth, Good and Beauty as universal senses of human existence embodied in the infinite variety of cultures (Chernyakova, 2018c).

Literature review

Different aspects of the development of education in the poly-cultural society of Russia are considered in modern pedagogical literature (Boziev, 2017; Mozgot, 2019). It follows from this considerations, that to be in accordance with culture of poly-cultural society pedagogy should embody the dialectic of individual and general features of many cultures (Dzhurinsky, 2010; Shontukova, 2018).

Some publications are designed to provide a range of theoretical ideas and practical suggestions that can be used in axiological studies and education (Kamalieva, 2018 a, b).

Special attention of researchers are paid to the formation of moral (Metlik, 2018; Saharova & Saharova, 2019) and aesthetic orientations of schoolchild and students (Panaiotidi, 2018; Romanova, 2019).

Yet it is obvious that there are differences in the interpretation of the essence of values (Asadullin & Frolov, 2019; Asadullin et al., 2018) and different approaches to the understanding of the real functions of values in culture.

Methodology

The research is based on the concept of values as the ultimate objectives of human existence. In the process of studying the values-based and culture-congruent teacher training the methods of content and logical analysis, interpretation, comparison, generalization and theoretical deduction were used.

Results

The essence of culture and values

The reality that is reflected in the concept of culture and is denoted by the term "culture" is a set of distinctive features that differentiate individuals and human communities according to specific mode of their existence and activity. In other words, the term "culture" displays an obvious fact that human communities and individuals live in different natural and social conditions, speak different languages, have different skills, knowledge, beliefs, create unique material and spiritual works, etc.

If culture is understood as a real way of existence of the subject, as a paradigm, matrix of his or her social activity, then the structure of culture is the structure of this internal form, paradigm, or manner of exercise of social activity. The essence of culture is expressed by its own structural elements that remain unchanged no matter what types of activities a subject of culture is carrying out. The unity and integrity of the cultural subject create consistency, i.e., coherent, hierarchically organized multilevel unity of all elements of culture as a way of existence of this subject:

– World views from which he or she proceeds;

– Knowledge that he or she owns;

– Value orientations that he or she adheres;

– Purposes that he or she sets before himself;

– Meanings that he or she embodies in his or her activities and its results;

– Ideals for which he or she strives;

– Norms which he or she follows;

– Means and methods that he or she uses, etc.

None of such concepts as "views", "purposes", "meanings", "value orientations", "norms", "ideals", "methods", and other of the kind can be used in analysis of the products of culture, but all of them reflect the elements of the cultural activity of a subject. We may apply questions about the meanings or purposes of anything: a war, a computer, a lunch, a symphony, a scientific theory, a novel, a social institute, – only and exclusively to the activity of cultural subject, which has made these results (products) or intends to learn and use them, but not to the results as such. Asking such questions, culturologists try to understand what content was embodied in the cultural products by the subject who created them.

As to the value orientations as the element of culture, it should be noticed that value attitude of people to the world is not identical to the determining of all that is significant for people. Value orientations deal not with our "preferences" or "standards of evaluation", but with satisfying the fundamental need of human beings in obtaining the meaning of their existence and the basis for substantiation of their purposes. No material or spiritual phenomenon, except that which is reflected in the concept of value, can meet this urgent and deepest need of human being as self-conscious-existence. The names of values are Truth, Good and Beauty (Chernyakova, 2018 a).

Values are relatively autonomous from external influences, since they always orientated the human beings on such deeds that contribute to the formation, development and improvement of man as the subject of socio-cultural activities. In the process of estimation of any phenomenon on the basis of values the presence or absence of the value-content in this phenomenon is established, and just this content becomes, in its turn, the direct reason for the preference of this phenomenon to any other, in which the value-content is not revealed.

Values cannot be hierarchically organized and do not provide a basis for the hierarchy of their embodiments. The reason of compelling people to organize and prioritize goals, means and results of their activity is not the "self-evident hierarchy of values", but just limited human capacity and the actual conditions of existence, not allowing a person to realize even in sequence, the more so – simultaneously, within a short life all that she/he considers as certainly true, good and beautiful. In the process of

substantiation of that which is really possible as something that is essentially prior gradual substitution of concepts is made, and a person, in the end, begins to consider the temporal sequence of his/her actions as "hierarchy" of forms of embodiments of values. But, just as a temporary sequence of events is not identical with their causal relations, it is not identical with hierarchical ordering of events. "To be earlier" does not mean "to be better", or "to be more valuable". Listing, classification, ranking, etc. of all that becomes the object of valuation does not affect the number, essence and equivalence of values, which remain the foundations for assessment and revealing the value-contents of any cultural phenomena.

Formation of value orientations in the process of teacher training

Cultural orientation and value content of teaching is expressed, first of all, in the formation of ideas about nature, society, culture and man, which correspond to their actual existence. That is why the most important function of the education system has always been and will always be the transmission from generation to generation of knowledge about the world. In the performing of this function the fundamental orientation of human culture towards Truth is expressed.

However, the orientation to the Truth is usually associated with scientific knowledge exclusively. Due to this understanding of the value orientation to the Truth representatives of all disciplines studied at school or university realize their direct involvement in the formation of the orientation to the Truth, since all academic disciplines are based on modern scientific knowledge. Mathematicians, physicists, chemists, biologists and representatives of any other scientific and technical disciplines taught at school or University need just a few minutes to draw attention of students to the fact that behind every fact, every formula, every law of natural sciences there are real people who were required not only perseverance, hard work, dedication, talent and intuition, but also a fearless pursuit of Truth, which gave strength to resist the criticism of colleagues and ignorance of society. But at the same time, limiting the orientation to Truth exclusively by scientific knowledge prevents understanding that all forms of knowledge: everyday, mythological, religious, philosophical, aesthetic – are focused on creating a true picture of the world.

The unity of individual and general features in the value content of consistent with culture teacher training assumes not only a teacher′s possession of modern knowledge about the object that the corresponding discipline studies, but also his/her ability to demonstrate to students with the help of modern technologies the enduring importance of the knowledge possessed by representatives of traditional cultures. This knowledge, not being scientific, was, nevertheless, true reflection of many vital for our ancestors sides of the world and embodied not only the desire for Truth, but also the really obtained and practically confirmed level of its achievement.

The diversity and inconsistency of the results of human knowledge indicate not the lack of value orientation to the Truth, but the complexity of the ways leading to its achievement.

In spite of the widespread belief that the formation of value orientations is exclusively related to the sphere of humanitarian knowledge, teachers of humanitarian disciplines, in contrast to teachers of natural and technical disciplines, have to solve much more complex methodological and methodical problems considering the value orientation to the Truth in humanitarian knowledge.

It is necessary to remember that humanitarian knowledge is directed to ideal phenomena: ideas, views, beliefs, etc., – the only method of their study being the interpretation of the material carriers of the ideal content. And the interpretation cannot be true or false, because no interpretation of the ideal can be either confirmed or disproved on the basis of scientific experimental practice. Any interpretation of historical events or works of art can only be contrasted with a different interpretation.

In this case, what does the value orientation to Truth in humanitarian knowledge mean?

On the one hand, in the process of studying history of society, theory of culture, artistic creativity, etc. it is important to study by scientific methods the material carriers of ideal phenomena: language texts, products of material culture, people's actions and so on. The results of such research, like the results of any scientific research, are recognized as true or false only on the basis of practical verification. On the other hand, humanitarians must constantly draw attention of students to different interpretations of the same material carriers. The value orientation towards Truth is manifested not in the desire to "prove" the truth of a single interpretation at all costs, but in the desire to understand the meaning and significance of each of the interpretations.

It is extremely important to demonstrate by concrete examples of the history and folklore of different ethnos that values always unite human beings, and, at the same time, that every nation and subject of culture has the freedom to embody values in various cultural products.

With the help of clear and simple examples from traditional fairy tales, myths, epics, proverbs and sayings, songs, etc. a teacher should be able to demonstrate to children where the violation of norms and rules adopted in society leads to. As individual tasks, it is advisable to invite students to prepare stories about how the aspirations for Truth, Good and Beauty are embodied in their native ethnic culture, and to discuss with them the common features and differences in the value orientations of different people, which need to be paid attention to. The analysis together with the students of the events of modern life makes it possible

to understand the consequences of immoral behavior and the need to accept the norms of morality as an unshakable basis for the existence of any culture.

There are no cultures, and have never been, in which people do not have ideas about good and evil. Even if at the dawn of human history social norms were not differentiated into proper moral and neutral in relation to moral choice, the very fact of normative regulation meant the restriction of animal instincts as an "evil" principle, preventing the formation of an individual as a being of the different – socio-cultural – nature.

What turns the young of the biological species *Homo sapiens* into a subject of culture is not in the human genome, but in the socio-cultural environment of the carrier of this genome. Socialization as a process of formation of socio-cultural qualities of an individual and his/her transformation into a subject of culture involves a constant, systematic, steady replacement of instinctive actions by arbitrary, conscious, based on social norms.

Good always remains Good, since it orientates people to preserve their socio-cultural essence. But the way and form of orientation to Good depends on many factors, the totality of which determines the specifics of the life of a particular subject of culture: an ethnos, a social group, an individual. It means that moral norms in different cultures can define the boundary between Good and evil in different ways, while maintaining the inviolability of the distinction between them. That is why consistent with culture teacher training should be carried out on the unshakable foundation of the distinction between Good and evil, moral and immoral.

As to the value orientation to Beauty, it is sufficient to notice that the infinite variety of forms of embodiment of value orientation to Beauty is easily demonstrated by examples of all types and genres of art, or by cultural estimations of natural phenomena and human appearance.

Nothing can become an absolute embodiment of values, since the meaning of any phenomenon is exhausted by the functions that it performs or the goals that it serves in culture. All concrete historical features of culture are transient and cannot serve as a basis for the formation of the subject of culture of the new generation in a rapidly changing socio-cultural environment. Only those value orientations that embody the constants of a given culture have an enduring character.

The constants of culture are invariant features of all its elements, transmitted from generation to generation both at the level of an unconsciously reproducible cultural paradigm and at the level of conscious ideological attitudes. The constants of culture determine the way of realization of value regulation, or the real configuration of the embodiment of values, which can be called the value orientation of the subject of culture and which is inseparable from the life of this subject to the same extent as the constants themselves.

The relationship between value orientations and cultural constants is similar to the relationship between content and form: cultural constants are the content ("internal form") of value orientations which determine the form ("natural boundaries") of their variability.

Those forms of embodiment of values that are associated with the constants of this culture differ from all other value-content forms by their higher sense-capacity. By calling works of art, actions of people, or customs "values", the ordinary consciousness is mistaken only in identifying values with the forms of their embodiment. However, socio-cultural intuition rarely makes a mistake in recognizing the value status of those cultural phenomena that really embody value orientations constant for a given subject. Changes in the value orientation cannot cross the boundaries lay down by the specifics of the constants of this culture. A fundamental change in the value orientation can only mean a radical change in the constants, which is equivalent to the destruction of this subject as such.

Discussions

The peculiarity of the problem situation in modern axiology is that it is necessary to defend the fundamental role of values in culture in a discussion with those who, it would seem, not only does not deny this role, but, on the contrary, emphasizes it in every possible way, using value arguments more often than any other. By calling a cultural phenomenon a "value", many researchers believe that they increase the socio-cultural status of this phenomenon or identify the reason why the preservation of this phenomenon should be taken care of.

However, existence of culture is characterized by many different features: tastes, preferences, behavior patterns, habits, and so on. In an effort to protect themselves from outside interference in their usual way of life people are ready to call their "values" everything that is included in the circle of their daily existence. At the same time, not only ordinary people, but axiologists also too often do not realize that the greatest threat to the preservation of ethno-cultural, professional and any other identity lies not in external influences as such, but in the mechanisms of transmission of cultural paradigms from generation to generation.

Each new generation preserves in its own culture that and only that which meets its interests, satisfies its needs, serves as a means of its self-expression. Therefore, the elevation to the status of "values" of any cultural phenomena familiar to the older generation entails not only theoretical problems of understanding the essence of values, but also practical difficulties in communication with the younger generation of subjects of this culture (Tarantej & Tarantej, 2018).

In the context of global cross-cultural contacts, information flows and the natural interest of young people in the life of their peers around the world, attempts to prove that the "values" of a particular culture are precisely those objects or ideas that were used or carried by their ancestors are doomed to failure.

It is necessary to pay special attention to the fact that the strategic goal of the endless repetition of the thesis about "ours" and "yours" values and adding to the list of "values" more and more new phenomena is to block the discussion of life-meaning issues and to accustom society to meaninglessness as the norm of everyday existence. The tactic is to introduce into everyday consciousness the confidence that, on the one hand, any value choice is possible and justified, and on the other – the "right choice" that ensures success in competition and high social status can only be made by "civilized people". Pointing to "ours" and "yours" values justifies or condemns today any actions of individuals and social groups.

It would be a mistake to interpret the philosophical teachings of various epochs in the spirit of modern axiology. However, it is indisputable that the search for those grounds that make a person not only a natural but also a social being, a carrier of reason and morality, is the main direction of ethical thought from antiquity to the present day. Special attention should be paid to the fact that the ancient Epicureans and Stoics were fully aware of the existence of many useful, but indifferent to the moral qualities of man things. Everything that is not related to the growth of reason and Logos – life and death, glory and infamy, work and pleasure, wealth and poverty, disease and health – was called "adiaphoria" and was considered to be the sphere of indifference to the social existence of man (Reale & Antiseri, 1994).

The opposite, nihilistic attitude to everything that goes beyond the vital goods defined by the subject itself has become a leading trend in Western European philosophy since the time of F. Nietzsche (Heidegger,1993).

In spite of the fact that the reason to use the term "values" in two different meanings was given by the founders of axiology themselves, today as in ancient times the use of the same term to refer to two fundamentally different socio-cultural phenomena: goods and senses – is a manifestation of homonymy leading to the loss of a single object of study. It is not the question about what of the two phenomena will the term "values" be assigned to. It is the matter of understanding that under any conditions compatible with the laws of logic and semiotics the use of the same term to refer to different phenomena will not make these phenomena identical. You can call anything you want "values", but the process of word usage itself will not make the goods of life and the senses of existence identical socio-cultural phenomena.

Thus, understanding that under the name of "value" can be such different objects as the goods of life and the senses of existence, leads to the elimination of internal theoretical contradictions in axiological research

and contributes to a deeper insight into the essence of culture. After all, the neo-Kantians are the originators of axiology not because they started the enumeration going to "bad infinity" of "everything that matters" to man, but because they named "values" the fundamental senses of human life (Chernyakova, 2018b).

Conclusion

No one can predict whether lessons of a teacher, information from available electronic resources or acquaintance with real people and their deeds will become for students an inspiring example of following the value orientation to the Good, Beauty and Truth. However, it is obvious that culture congruent pedagogy should specify the path along which students should move to form their value orientations.

Pedagogy based on the violation of the principle of unity of individual and general features of culture and "consistent" only with such unilateral manifestations of culture as cultural isolation, culturocentrism, ethnocentrism, etc. leads to the formation of flawed subjects of culture unable to live in the world of diverse ways of life.

To solve the problem of organic unity of individual and general features in the formation of socio-cultural qualities of students and become consistent with culture in poly-cultural society teacher training should be based on the theoretical, methodological and methodical basis of the concept of fundamental values of Truth, Good and Beauty as universal senses of human existence embodied in the infinite variety of cultures.

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