

DESIGNING OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IN CULTURALLY DIVERSE ENVIRONMENT (REGIONAL LEVEL)

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Abstract

In the article the authors present to the reader's attention the specifics of inclusive education development in a culturally diverse environment, moving away from a narrow understanding of the term «inclusive education» and considering it in a much broader sense - as including people with different cultures (worldview, traditions, family education, values) in the educational process, as well as people with disabilities. The authors study the concepts of «culture», «cultural diversity» based on the works of P. S. Gurevich, Victor de Munck, H. C. Triandis and present their understanding of this phenomenon in the context of inclusion. Based on the ethno-cultural specifics of the Republic of Tatarstan, a pedagogical model for the development of inclusive education in a culturally diverse environment for higher educational institutions has been developed.

Keywords: inclusive education, designing, culture, culturally diverse environment, ethno-relativism, ethno-cultural specifics.

► Nowadays the significant changes happen in various areas of our life: economic, social, cultural, scientific, and educational. They are accompanied by serious technological and digital transformations. On one hand, these changes contribute to the development of all these areas, but, on the other hand, they present certain risks and dangers.

Any change, as we know, can be both constructive and destructive. An example of the positive impact of digital transformation processes is providing opportunities for self-expression, self-realization by people in the field of culture, sports, art, increasing the availability of education for people with disabilities (thanks to online and digital technologies), getting access to educational resources and services for people from the remote areas, getting the opportunity to exchange knowledge, ideas and research for scientists from different countries thanks to video conferencing services, etc.

However, there is also a negative side of these innovations: through digital technologies and social networks the propaganda of «unhealthy values», violent acts, dangerous non-traditional religious movements and groups is spread. Adolescents are particularly susceptible to this negative influence. The growing propaganda of marathons, financial pyramids, «beautiful pictures», which confuse person's mind and consciousness, lead to mass delusion in society, to the loss of values and ideals, and sometimes to even greater social stratification.

In this situation there is just one conclusion – whether it is a positive or negative influence, society becomes culturally diverse. We can often notice people of different nationalities,

color of skin, subcultures, people with an unusual appearance on the streets, in schools and universities, in public places. At the same time, appearance – language, clothes – is only 30% of what is open to us. Culture is expressed not only externally – by color of skin or appearance. 70% of culture, in our opinion, is hidden behind external attributes: the values of each person, his/her family environment, religious views and beliefs, past and present, «baggage of experience», probably brought from another country (cities, villages), his/her prejudices, intentions that we do not yet know about ...

Therefore, our society can be called as culturally diverse regardless of how many ethnic groups live in it. Culture is a phenomenon that is considered much more widely. Another important conclusion that we come to is that education is a kind of core, a driver that solves several problems:

- education harmonizes relations between people of different cultures, promotes the establishment of humane friendly relations in such a diverse environment;

- education corrects, directs students to a more true path when they are too exposed to negative cultural influence, and also increases the level of ethnic identity in a situation where this feeling is lost in case of excessive influence of false values from outside.

Therefore, the educational organization, in our opinion, can move the individual culture and all cultural diversity in the right direction and for good purpose. In this regard, we move towards the idea of inclusive education, which is based on the diversity of physical and intellectual abilities, cultures.

So, let's study the concepts «culture» and «culturally diverse environment» in the researches of famous scientists. According to P. S. Gurevich, «culture is a «second nature», «secondary artificial environment», which a person overlays on nature. «These are ideas, habits, values systems, and the social heritage that goes through the centuries. These are the values that society share» [6, p. 12]. An interesting study of the cultural phenomenon was carried out by G. H. Triandis. He considers culture as an iceberg, which includes the visible and invisible parts. The visible part is presented by the elements of objective culture (clothing, names). The invisible part is a subjective culture (relationships between people, specific beliefs, values) [6, p. 102].

What is cultural diversity? This concept implies the coexistence of various knowledge, beliefs, arts, customs, religions, languages, ethnic groups, abilities. According to UNESCO Declaration of Cultural Diversity, culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group. It also emphasizes that cultural diversity is expressed in the uniqueness and diversity of the characteristics inherent in groups and communities that make up humanity [8].

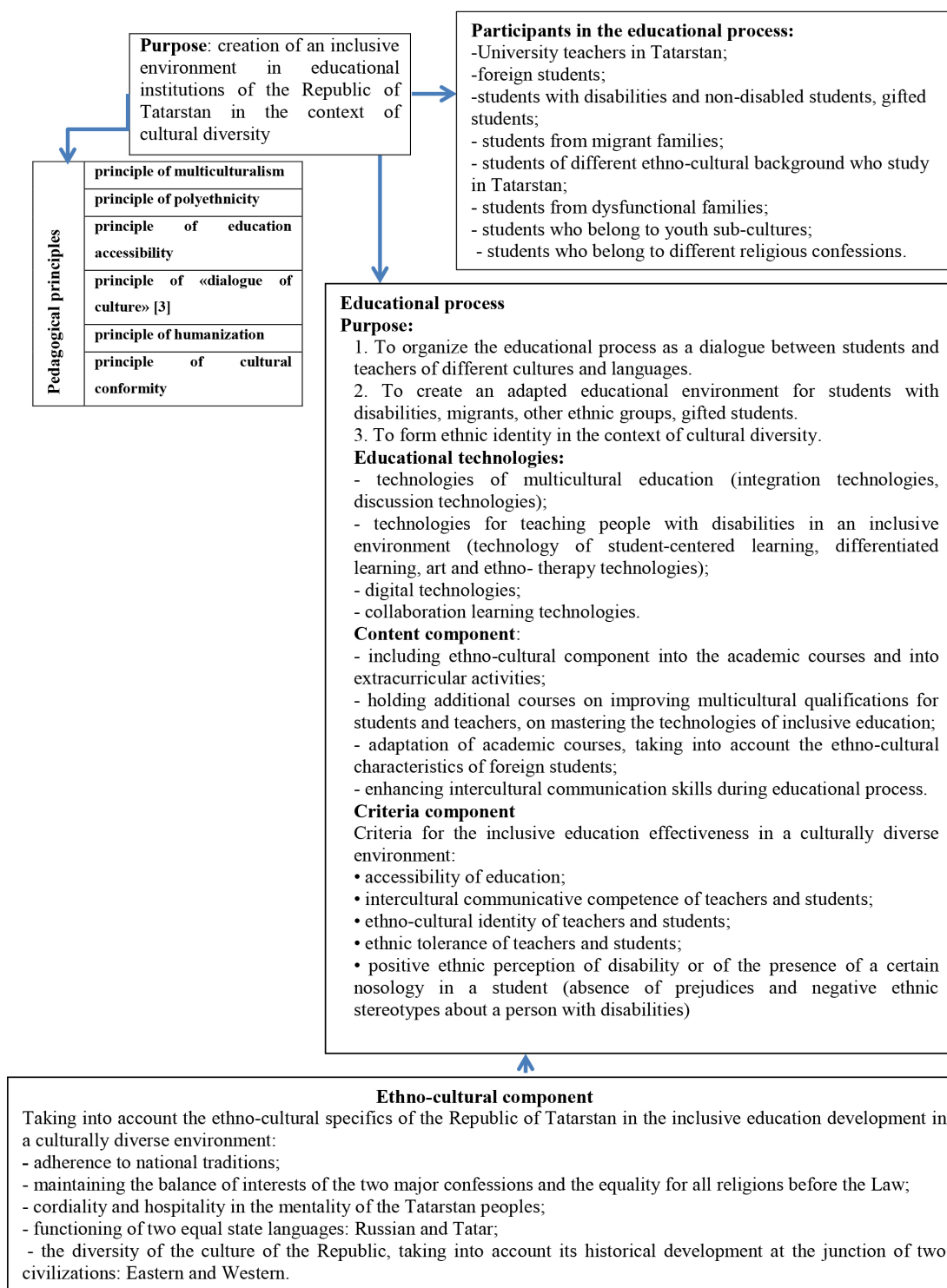
Today, many countries have a culturally diverse environment. From the ethnic diversity perspective, Russia is not an exception. More than 160 ethnic groups live in its regions; each of them has its own cultural specificity and historical heritage. In our study we describe the specifics of inclusive education development in the Republic of Tatarstan as in the culturally diverse region.

Why did we choose this Republic for our study? According to official statistics, Tatarstan is one of the most multinational territories in Russia. Over 173 nationalities live in the Republic, as well as the representatives of such confessions as Islam and Orthodoxy, Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism and others. Tatarstan entered the top 3 regions in terms of the number of foreign students. Students from Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan), Latin American countries (Colombia, Brazil), African countries (Ghana, Nigeria) and others study in Tatarstan universities. Kazan, the capital of Republic, also entered the top five cities that pretended to be the European Youth Capital of 2022. The youth culture develops, as well as youth subcultures have become widespread in the Republic [9]. Among them are graffiti artists, breakers, extreme sportsmen [5].

And we return to the definition of «inclusive education». According to OECD terminology, «excluded» are «children and adolescents at risk»: those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with disabilities [14]. According to the Federal register of people with disabilities, there were 298,086 people with disabilities in the Republic of Tatarstan, including 15,674 disabled children (2.28 percent among other regions) [10].

Tatarstan is a dynamically developing region with an extensive labor market that requires new workers. Migrants fill the lack of workplaces that are not covered by local residents. In January-October 2020, the migrations increased to 4.4 thousand people. Thus, we can firmly say that Tatarstan has a diverse environment (social, cultural, demographic), and the development of inclusive education in a culturally diverse environment is a relevant issue for the Republic, both in terms of the disability problem and from ethno-cultural diversity perspective. Therefore, a certain model for the inclusive education development is needed.

Today on the basis of Kazan Innovative University named by V.G. Timiryasov (Russia), headed by the rector A. V. Timiryasova, the Research Institute of Pedagogical Innovations and Inclusive Education was created. One of the areas of its research is psychological and pedagogical aspects of inclusive education, development of inclusive education in a multicultural environment. Research Institute scientists under the guidance of its director, Ph. D., prof. D. Z. Akhmetova published several scientific works on certain areas of inclusive education [1, 2]. And today we – scientists of this Institute – taking into account several approaches to understanding pedagogical model [4, 13], as well as after reviewing existing models of inclusive education in a multicultural aspect [12, 11], developed our own model for the development of inclusive education in a culturally diverse environment (on the example of the Republic of Tatarstan) (Picture 1).



Picture 1. The model of inclusive education development in the culturally diverse environment for higher education institutions (Tatarstan Republic)

So, the ethno-cultural component is the base of this model. It involves the development of inclusive education taking into account the ethno-cultural specifics of the Republic of Tatarstan. Therefore, when building the educational process it is important to take into account the historical development of the Republic, the diversity of cultures, multi-confessionalism, adherence to national traditions, mentality.

The model is built on the following principles: multiculturalism, multi-ethnicity, accessibility of education, humanization, cultural conformity, dialogue of cultures. The principle of multiculturalism implies showing respect to different cultures and creating conditions for joint educational and creative activities of students from different ethnic and cultural background. The principle of multi-ethnicity emphasizes respect to students of different ethnic groups with their ethno-cultural features (values, worldview, mentality, language picture of the world).

Let briefly characterize the specifics of inclusive education development in a culturally diverse environment.

1. The educational process is built taking into account the individual ethno-cultural characteristics of students, their physical and intellectual capabilities, and the social situation of development.
2. An ethno-cultural component (history, culture of the peoples of the Republic of Tatarstan and other ethnic groups) is included into the content of academic disciplines, which form students' knowledge about their native ethnic group and other ethnic groups, respect to national history and traditional folk culture and pride in cultural heritage.
3. Intercultural communication is built taking into account the individual linguistic and religious characteristics of students, level of life, family situation and other cultural aspects.
4. The process of interaction in a students group is based on the principle of «dialogue of cultures» [3].
5. The educational process is aimed at overcoming ethnocentric attitudes among students, as well as at overcoming the negative ethnic perception of disability among students.

We are currently working on the development of each part of this model, and its main components will be described in further studies.

CONCLUSION

So, the main feature of the model described in this article is that the main focus is concentrated on the culturally diverse environment of the Republic of Tatarstan (the diversity of religious, ethno-cultural, social characteristics of the people living in it, especially young people, the diversity of individual characteristics of people with disabilities, the presence of different subcultures). The construction of an inclusive educational environment is built taking into account the ethno-cultural specifics of the Republic of Tatarstan. The model is distinguished by its focus on ethno-relativism – awareness of cultural diversity (acceptance of cultural differences, adaptation to differences and integration of differences). In addition, ethno-relativism in the views of people increases their general level of culture and, as a result, overcomes the negative perception of «inclusion» and children with disabilities in society due to anachronistic ethnic stereotypes, religious and cultural beliefs.

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