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DOI <https://doi.org/10.26661/2522-4360-2019-1-32-03>**THE ESSENCE OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION****Holovanova T. P., PhD in Pedagogy, Associate Professor***Zaporizhzhia National University, Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine*

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**Keywords:**

multiculturalism, multicultural education, tolerance, polycultural environment.

The article presents a theoretical approach to the theory of multicultural education. The urgency and risk of multicultural education in the current political, social, cultural and economic conditions of Ukrainian society are indicated. The theoretical foundations of multicultural education and the content of key concepts are revealed through concepts: education, culture, values, tolerance, intercultural dialogue, diversity, cultural pluralism. Multicultural education challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society and accepts and affirms the cultural pluralism (ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic, and gender among others). Multicultural education relates to the recognition of values, lifestyles, and symbolic representations. Multiculturalism has become a common paradigm in curriculum development at all levels of education in the US and Canada. In Ukraine, the tasks of multicultural education are addressed through ethnic education, civic, patriotic, linguistics and language education. It is noted that adopting a multicultural model of education places serious obligations on the education system and will require adaptation to new high standards and standards. As multiculturalism requires the promotion and preservation of diversity, it must be balanced against other measures aimed at achieving national consolidation. A promising area is an integrative approach to the interaction of multicultural, patriotic, civic and gender education of the student youth.

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**Ключові слова:**

мультикультуралізм, полікультурна освіта, толерантність, полікультурне середовище.

У статті представлено теоретичний підхід до поняття «полікультурна освіта». Зазначено актуальність та ризики полікультурної освіти в сучасних політичних, соціальних, культурних та економічних умовах українського суспільства. Теоретичні основи полікультурної освіти та зміст ключових понять розкриваються через концепти: освіта, культура, цінності, толерантність, міжкультурний діалог, різноманітність, культурний плюралізм. Підкреслюється, що мультикультурна освіта відкидає расизм та інші форми дискримінації в школах та суспільстві. Мультикультурна освіта стосується визнання цінностей, способу життя та символічних уявлень. Мультикультуралізм став загальною парадигмою розвитку навчальних програм на всіх рівнях освіти в США та Канаді. В Україні завдання полікультурної освіти вирішуються через етнічне виховання, громадянську, патріотичну, лінгвістичну та мовну освіту. Зазначається, що прийняття мультикультурної моделі освіти покладає серйозні зобов'язання на систему освіти і вимагатиме адаптації до нових високих норм та стандартів. Оскільки мультикультуралізм передбачає підтримку та збереження різноманіття, він повинен бути збалансований іншими заходами, спрямованими на досягнення національної консолідації. Перспективним напрямом є інтегративний підхід до взаємодії полікультурного, патріотичного, громадянського та гендерного виховання студентської молоді.

**Problem statement**

The processes of democratic change that take place in Ukraine's education is conditioned not only by the world educational experience, but also by the social change in the Ukrainian education itself. The modern education policy is to ensure that every Ukrainian child has equal access to quality education that meets his or her needs, the needs of parents, society, the challenges of the future [1]. Today the Ukrainian nation face new challenges. The combination of the ongoing conflict and the difficult

economic situation has brought new tension to Ukraine's people. Ukraine is marked by population changes associated with fluctuations in emigration, regional differences in internal migration. An additional risk for multicultural education in Ukraine is the manifestation of bullying, xenophobia, intolerance, discrimination and sexism in society. Increased migration, growing diversity, the boom in information technology and globalisation are having a profound effect on people's identities. It requires researchers to think carefully about values, about clashes

between competing worldviews, about the attitudes and behaviours we can and cannot accept [2].

In such circumstances, the problem of the implementation of the principle of multiculturalism, that declared in the official documents that regulate state policy in the field of education in Ukraine, becomes especially important. On this basis, it can be argued that in order to solve the problem of tolerant coexistence of different ethnic and social communities, a deeper study of the phenomenon of multicultural education as such is needed. At the applied level, the expediency of the article is explained, first of all, by the necessity to bring the vocational educational program “Higher school pedagogy”, “Primary education”, “Preschool education”, “Special education” closer to the professional needs of students and teachers of higher education in the context of educational reform, to promote the effectiveness of the Center for Gender Education at the Faculty of Social Pedagogy and Psychology of Zaporizhzhia National University. The article was prepared within the framework of a comprehensive program of research work of the Department of Pedagogy and Psychology of Educational Activity “Psychological and pedagogical principles of competence development of subjects of educational space.

#### **Analysis of papers**

Issues of education and socialization were considered from philosophical, sociological, psychological, and cultural perspectives in scientific studies by J. Dewey E. Dirksheim. Methodological aspects of formation of ethnic and cultural values of young people are researched by I. Bekh, H. Vasianovych, S. Goncharenko, I. Ziaziun, V. Kremen, H. Filipchuk and others. The Ukrainian studies of multicultural education include the works of these scientists: O. Sukhomlynska, I. Loschenova, O. Hrytsenko, T. Klynchenko, V. Kuzmenko, G. Levchenko. The issues of multiculturalism are highlighted in the field of migration pedagogy (O. Gukalenko, G. Soldatova and others) and ethnic psychology (N. Lebedieva, T. Stefanenko and others). Having taken into account the various social and cultural origins of their fellow citizens, the authors of the monograph state [3], “that educational institutions and mass media are an important means of developing symbols that affect perceptions of and attitudes towards “the other” (whether it be individuals, groups, behaviours, or cultures), the ability to tolerate differences, and to eventually accept and adapt to them.” We agree that one of the main trends in multicultural studies should be analysis focused on the curriculum that focuses on diversity and history, on the goals, objectives and principles of the multicultural education. Assessing the state of polycultural education in Ukraine, I. Bakhov states, “that it is not the priority of education and pedagogy. Political declarations and pedagogical writings contain sensible calls for education in the spirit multiculturalism, but not always and not everywhere they are implemented in practice. Scientists-teachers, school teachers are often silent regarding “uncomfortable questions” as ethnic conflicts, cultural prejudice and nationalist manifestations” [4].

#### **Selection of previously unresolved parts, a common problem to which the article is devoted**

Despite the growing interest in the study of particular aspects of the development of the theory and practice of multicultural education, a holistic vision of the problem

of multicultural education remains. Traditionally, multiculturalism is considered in the context of ethnic diversity, and multicultural training of citizens is narrowed down to the cultivation of a culture of interethnic communication, tolerance of ethnocultural differences [5]. Others point out on the rights paradigm, the educative value of the rights discourse has the potential to raise consciousness and promote principles of multiculturalism and interculturalism [6]. To identify the theoretical foundations of multicultural education, it is necessary, first of all, to determine the content of the key concepts – education, culture, values, tolerance, multicultural education, polyculturalism, intercultural education.

#### **Formulation of the aims of the article**

The aim of the article is to explore the essence of multicultural education, to analyse the link of the multiculturalism, tolerance, multicultural education, polyculturalism, intercultural education.

#### **Statement of the basic material**

Before proceeding with the discussion, it is essential to explain certain concepts that will be used in the following statements. Typically, the concept multiculturalism is combined with philosophical or political ideas. This is also one of the most interesting educational paradigms favouring the building of “dialogue of cultures” [7].

Education, as John Dewey (1916) put it, a social process – “a process of living and not a preparation for future living” [8]. In this view Education can be defined as deliberate, planned experiences designed to transmit certain values, knowledge, skills, competencies and behaviours across generations. The term involves three categories: Formal education refers to institutionalised instruction, which took place in the kindergartens, schools, colleges and universities; non-formal education refers to instruction by organized groups outside the formal educational structure, such as clubs and associations; and informal education refers to what is learned from all other societal institutions.

Although the term education is not synonymous with socialization, it is important to recognize the part all forms of education play in the socialization process. E. Durkheim defined education as “methodological socialization of the young generation” [8]. A lot of the essays explore this role and the interaction of education with other agents of socialization, such as family, media, religion and peers, culture.

Culture is an extremely complex concept. Many authors have tried to define it. Some meanings are related while others differ. Besides the fact that man acquires meaning and understanding from his own culture, the culture also assigns what man takes or considers as important in life. Cultures are learned. Individuals learn a certain culture. Culture is then transferred from one generation to another. Each ethnic group has its own culture. However, certain elements are common to more than one group. Every culture has norms of behaviour whereby individuals measure their own behaviours. It is expected that every member of a particular cultural group should adhere to and operate within the relevant and expected

cultural norms. The authors convey that a value refers to that which is worthwhile, and which one should strive for. Common/shared values should enable ethnic groups to perceive themselves as legitimate groups or structures woven into the fabric of the social, economic and political institutions of society. Thus, multiculturalism involves a variety of life styles (which are based on value orientations, attitudes, activities, especially relationships, etc.), characteristic of various social groups: ethnic and religious, age and gender, professional [9].

The task of the education system, therefore, is to prepare a person for effective activities and communication in a multicultural environment, which is associated with the awareness of cultural diversity, a tolerant attitude towards this multidimensional task and the ability to behaviour according to the specific cultural context.

Education has always been shaped by the predominant economic, social, political, cultural and historical forces. Scientific studies of multicultural education focus on the current state of multicultural education, taking into account these influences.

According to I. Bakhov [10], historical development of multicultural education in the USA and Canada can be conditionally represented by the following periods: change of the ethnocultural composition of the population of the country; intensification of socio-political movements for human rights and freedom in the country; reviewing the value and content components of American education. Many authors have stressed that Canada has always been a multicultural country [8]. In the 1960s, such concepts as “diversity”, “cultural pluralism” and “ethnic content” appeared in American educational literature; in the early 70’s – “ethnic minority education”, “ethnic education”, “multicultural education.” In the modern philosophical, pedagogical and political literature since the 1970s, the terms “multicultural education”, “intercultural education”, “transcultural education”, have been used in parallel with the concept of “multiculturalism” for certain political decisions [10]. Therefore, without delving into the history and theory of these issues, it should be noted that they reflect the development of ideas about cultural pluralism in education.

But it must be clearly understood that cultural pluralism is always connected with the notion of tolerance, respect for ethnic minorities, other views, cultures, religions, ability to communicate and adapt in a multicultural environment. Since the mid-1990s, Ukrainian scholars published works, which contain the results of conceptual and empirical studies of multicultural education, tolerance, migration, gender education. Dr. Popova's recent work became the book in Ukraine to examine multicultural education in a context of the discipline “Fundamentals of multilingualism” [11]. The book is constructed around the themes of specificity of multilingual education, regulative documents and perspectives, polycultural environment. The author states, that at the end of the twentieth century, the term “multicultural education” was recorded in the International Encyclopedia of Education with the meaning: “a pedagogical process in which two or more cultures that differ in language, ethnic, national or racial characteristics are involved.” There are some synonymous terms to the

one under study: polycultural, multicultural, intercultural cross-cultural and bicultural. These terms differ in their origins (Greek, Latin, English, Ukrainian) [11]. The author states, that the main objective of multicultural education in Ukraine is the formation of people’s ethnic and racial consciousness [11].

The same approach we can trace in another conception. I. Bakhov states, that “the main tasks of multicultural education are the formation and development of specialists” understanding of the diversity of cultures in the world, the development of a positive attitude to cultural differences, the ability to use foreign languages as an instrument of integration into the culture of other peoples, the implementation of a dialogue of cultures within their country and modern civilizations peace, education of specialists in the spirit of peace, tolerance, humane interethnic communication”[10].

The understanding of multicultural education was proposed by American researcher James A. Banks, considered the “father of multicultural education” [12]. According to [13], multicultural education is an idea, an educational reform movement, and a process (Banks, 1997). As an idea, multicultural education seeks to create equal educational opportunities for all students, including those from different racial, ethnic, and social-class groups. Multicultural education tries to create equal educational opportunities for all students by changing the total school environment so that it will reflect the diverse cultures and groups within a society and within the nation’s classrooms. Multicultural education is a process because its goals are ideals that teachers and administrators should constantly strive to achieve. James A. Banks, has identified five dimensions of multicultural education. They are: content integration, the knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, an equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture and social structure [12]. In practice, multicultural education is a must for quality education. Multicultural education includes curriculum and administrative efforts to help students benefit from as many models, alternatives and opportunities across the spectrum of our cultures as possible. At the same time, according to scientists, such education allows individual development within any culture; each individual is aware that a particular group (ethnic, cultural, social and racial) exists autonomously as part of an interconnected and interdependent community. Analysing the main factors that slow down the spread of multiculturalism in the US education system, I. Bakhov points out that institutional racism remains a serious obstacle. It is to be recalled that, in contrast to individual racism, which involves only personal prejudice against representatives of other cultures, institutional racism has the power to provide with or deprive a person of certain rights and opportunities into institutional racism is impossible without appropriate legislative changes [10]. Multiculturalism, an established discipline in the field of education, manifests a body of knowledge, texts, and curricula [9]. Teaching multicultural education from a critical perspective means engaging preservice teachers in understanding their cultural and social identities as well as their socioeconomic positions and how these aspects of their character may affect teaching and student learning [9].

### Conclusions from this study

There is no consensus among researchers on understanding the nature of multicultural education. Multicultural education is a complex, multidimensional concept that combines diverse approaches to addressing the cultural heterogeneity of modern society. Despite the continuation of these debates, multiculturalism has become (though at times reluctantly) an accepted paradigm in curriculum formation at all levels of education, and the establishment of this discipline has now led to other issues and concerns in the USA and Canada. In Ukraine, the tasks of multicultural education are solved through ethnic education, civic, patriotic, linguistics and language education. The adoption of a

multicultural education model places serious obligations on the education system and will require adaptation to new high norms and standards. Whereas multiculturalism implies the support and preservation of diversity, it must be balanced by other measures aimed at achieving national consolidation, such as the creation of a single educational, informational and cultural space; introduction of patriotic education and development of civic spirit; consensus in the language field; dissemination to society of social and political values that would be recognized as common to all citizens. We consider it a promising study of an integrative approach to multicultural, patriotic, civic and gender education of student youth.

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