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Forming of the system of socially significant values as the subjective basis of citizenship

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Abstract

The topicality of the issue is indisputable as positive changes in the society can only be possible if there is active participation of citizens and a high level of civic consciousness among the youth. However, subjective attitude to certain social events and the assessment of their significance can differ to a great extent among secondary school students and can even be totally opposite. This depends on the development of the individual system of values of each student. In the present article, values are regarded as certain developed attitudes to society, people, and oneself. Guiding values play a key role in the system of values of senior secondary school students. In the current crisis situation in Latvia, individual values have been considerably deformed. This also refers to the understanding of citizenship as a value. The purpose of the article is to develop and test empirically a social-pedagogic model ensuring the development of socially-significant values and to consider the development of citizenship in the process of education based on these values.

The methodological basis of the research is as follows: the cultural-historical theory treating the development of personality as a process during which an individual acquires cultural values (Vygotsky,1968, Geertz,1973); humanistic theories describing personality as an integrated whole (Maslow,1954, Rogers,1969, Fromm, 1956, Frank,1992). The basis of the study is national minority schools in Latvia

Keywords: *citizenship, individual system of values, social-pedagogic model*

The Content of Citizenship as a Personality Feature

Citizenship is considered as an integrative feature of personality, as an acquired value. Besides, we take into account the view expressed by Frank (1992), who answering the question, "How can we hand over values in the process of education or give students something like the meaning of life?" said, "...we can not learn values; we have to emotionally experience them (Frank, 1992, p. 67).

Compared to particular psychic functions like memory, emotions, and attention, emotional experience refers to an activity aimed at changing the inner world of an individual and the exposure of the system of emotional perception, thinking, and action. Thus, we consider emotional experience as a form of facilitating interpersonal communication of the participants of educational interaction (Rogers 1969), on the one hand, and as a form of cognition aimed at emotional value acquisition of the educational

material, on the other hand, thus ensuring the simultaneous development of both learners' intellect and affective features (Vygotsky, 1997).

The transformation of objective cultural values into personal ones is not possible without the involvement of senior secondary school students themselves, without their activity aimed at the acquisition of the cultural values of a society. It is not enough to know that there exists good, justice, and compassion – each individual has to discover these values for himself/herself in the process of his/her spiritual development and to actualize these values in the conditions of everyday life. The views of Vygotsky and his followers are very important in this respect, according to which the development of a learner can be considered not as the acquisition of norms and the picture of the world common to everybody, but as self-formation, search for oneself in the dialogue with cultural communication partners. The development of an ability to engage in an intercultural dialogue is considered as a dominant element in the development of citizenship.

These ideas formed the basis for the development of the content of citizenship.

In the present article, citizenship is regarded as an integrative formation representing the interconnection of four structures:

- the cognitive structure – knowledge about the society and national legislation;
- the structure of values, including values like duty, responsibility, deep respect for national spiritual and moral heritage, the domination of national level values and ethnic tolerance;
- the emotional structure, including love for one's country and national culture, the feeling of solidarity with other citizens of the state or within a certain ethnic group;
- the practical structure, including individual's actions and certain positions he/she takes as a citizen, as well as the conformity of citizen's actions to the declared values and feelings.

Value Orientations of Senior Form Students in Latvia

The Following objectives have been identified for the analysis of the value orientations of senior form students:

- To study the system of values (to determine the value disposition and personally meaningful values);
- To analyse the understanding of the meaning of life by senior form students (to identify the dominating values).

When characterising value orientations, it is necessary to take into account that the acquisition of social values and their comprehension is an active process, and it is determined to a considerable extent by the activity of a personality (Jung, 1994).

Successful self-determination is characterised by a sufficiently wide range of highly significant values, while insufficient one implies their narrow range or absence. Subjectively, successful self-determination is characterised by the experience of the meaningfulness of one's life, while unsuccessful self-determination – the experience of its senselessness (Kegan, 1982).

Based on the analysis of the key value-based human relationships presented in the philosophic and psychological literature (Vygotsky, 1926/1997, Matsumoto, 2002), we have singled out the values of a self-realising personality:

- Attitude to oneself as a value;
- Attitude to another person as a value;
- Attitude to work as a value;
- Attitude to citizenship as a value;
- Attitude to future prospects as a value;
- Attitude to knowledge as a value;
- Attitude to duty as a value;
- Attitude to intercultural dialogue as a value.

It should be pointed out that attitude to man as the highest value is a system-forming factor of the human spiritual constitution. It is a universal relationship, the core of a modern personality. All other relationships (both positive and negative ones) result from this key attitude to man.

The test “The Values of Senior Form Students” was used for the diagnostics of the system of value orientations (value saturation). The characteristics of the levels of value saturation was determined.

A high level of value saturation: a wide range of highly significant positive values. Senior form students know these values, understand their content, are guided by these values in their behaviour.

A medium level of value saturation: a reasonable range of highly significant positive values. Senior form students know these values and understand their content. However, they are guided by these values depending on a particular situation.

The main objective of the forming stage of the experiment, which has not been finished yet, was to develop the attitude of senior secondary school students to intercultural dialogue and citizenship.

There was carried out a survey in order to clarify what values senior-form students choose and what values are personally significant to them. A list of various values: spiritual, practical, focused on self, focused on other people, and focused on communication was offered to the students. The students selected the values personally significant for them. The most significant ones were rated as 3, less significant ones as 2, and the insignificant ones as 1. The results are presented in the following table.

	Pushkin Lyceum		Riga Secondary School No 34		Riga Secondary School No 29	
	Coefficient	Rank	Coefficient	Rank	Coefficient	Rank
1. Active life	0.58	10	0.14	14	0.58	7
2. Wisdom	0.06	13	0.04	17	0.52	9
3. Health	0.5	11	0.7	6	0.9	5
4. Interesting work	0.92	3	0.68	8	0.5	8
5. Natural beauty and art	0	14	0.12	15	0.04	17
6. Love	0.78	4	0.9	3	0.9	6
7. Materially well-provided life	0.96	1	1	1	0.94	1
8. Good trusted friends	0.7	6	1	2	0.9	4
9. Social acknowledgment	0	15	0.18	11	0.08	15
10. Cognition	0.6	9	0.66	9	0.04	16
11. Career	0.94	2	0.94	4	0.52	10
12. Self-perfection	0.68	7	0.24	10	0.52	11
13. Entertainment	0	16	0.84	5	0.94	2
14. Citizenship	0.5	12	0.14	13	0.5	13
15. Happy family life	0.68	8	0.82	6	0.94	3
16. Happiness of others	0	17	0.12	16	0.02	18
17. Intercultural dialogue	0	18	0.16	12	0.12	14
18. Self-confidence	0.78	5	0.4	18	0.52	12

Table. 1 The Ranking of Life Values According to their Significance by Students from Various Institutions of Secondary Education

The analysis of the results showed that interesting work, materially well-provided life, and career are the most significant values for the lyceum students. Good friends, self-confidence and love also occupy leading positions in the scale of value orientations, while the values like responsibility, health, happy family life, cognition, active life, and wisdom seem to be less significant. Social acknowledgment, the happiness of others, entertainment, intercultural dialogue, natural beauty and art are not the main goals of human life, according to the lyceum students.

Similarly, the students of Riga Secondary School No 34 do not consider social acknowledgment, the happiness of other people, entertainment, natural beauty, and art as the key life values. The students of this school consider love, materially well-provided life, and career as significant values. Good trusted friends, interesting work, and happy family life occupy leading positions in the scale of value orientations. Less significant values are: self-confidence, health, self-perfection, responsibility, active life, cognition and intercultural dialogue.

The students of ordinary secondary schools do not consider the values like development, active life, social cognition, the happiness of others, creativity, natural beauty and art as significant values. Materially well-provided life, health and happy family life appear to be more significant to them. Good trusted friends, love and entertainment also occupy leading positions in the scale of value orientations. Interesting work, self-confidence, active life, citizenship, self-perfection, career, the happiness of other people, intercultural dialogue are less significant values.

The analysis of the results of the survey showed that intercultural dialogue and citizenship is not considered as significant values by senior secondary school students.

The reasons of this given by the students were quite similar: “I can’t change anything in the state and its legal system.”

Organization of the Educational Process Based on the Intercultural Dialogue.

The social-pedagogic model for the development of citizenship among senior secondary school students includes:

- diagnostics of the individual system of values and citizenship at the initial stage of the experiment;
- organization of the educational process based on the intercultural dialogue.

Organization of the educational process implied working in two interrelated directions – the development of the intercultural dialogue and the formation of citizenship.

The first direction refers to the humanitarian approach to education, i.e. the direction towards an individual. Within the framework of school subjects, this direction manifested itself, first, as the incorporation of humanitarian issues in the content of education; second, as the implementation of a cultural component consisting of four elements:

- subject content, including the cultural experience of humankind in the form of knowledge;
- action content in the system of culture (forms of action, skills);
- learners’ personal socio-cultural experience, the system of relationships manifesting itself in cultural needs and value orientations;
- teacher’s socio-cultural experience.

However, it is not possible to limit ourselves to this extensive approach to the solution of the problem since the relations between a teacher and a learner do not undergo any radical transformations in this case. The extensive approach to humanitarian education has to be supplemented by an intensive component as well. In this case, humanitarian education is implemented not only within the framework of the subject content, but also within the logic of the educational process. It is necessary for the educational process to be creative and focused on an individual. Thus, it implies a different attitude to a learner, who is the center of the educational process, the subject of actions and relationships, and the acquisition of culture as the system of human values and meanings.

The second direction implied the involvement of students in the intercultural dialogue by means of the organization of independent practical activity, aimed at the formation of responsibility as an important quality of citizenship.

The first direction was implemented in the lessons of humanitarian subjects. These subjects served as the sources of social experience for the learners by bringing them into

the world of human relationships, including those of artistic images and historical figures, and facilitating the development of the cognitive and emotional basis of citizenship.

The incorporation of the cultural component of the content of education into the actual educational process made it possible to organize discussions on various topical issues ("Man is the measure of everything", "Is human dignity a value in the modern world?", "Latvia is our common home", etc. In a history lesson, a teacher asked students to write an essay expressing their opinion on the statement: "German is my nickname, man is my name" by A. Diesterweg.

Students' opinions mainly focused on general human issues: "This idea is important for Latvia; it has a universal human meaning", "I am glad that now we are the citizens of Europe", etc.

The discussion of V. Levy's book "The Art of Being Different" also brought about considerable interest.

The second direction was implemented during students' practice. Practice is a compulsory component of the content of education in each department of the lyceum. During the pedagogic practice in the Department of Psychology and Pedagogy, we observed a new level of students' self awareness and understanding of their role in the society. In the future, many students wanted to become teachers. The feeling of responsibility not only for themselves, but also for little children turned them into adults. The practice helped students understand the essence of teacher's profession, its significance for the transformation of the society and themselves. There was formed the motivation of an adult, the citizen of a particular society.

Naturally, professional conversations with teachers and common solution of the encountered pedagogic problems formed different relationships between the lyceum students and teachers. They became colleagues interested in the successful outcome of a common task. The dialogue was the main form of learning. As a result, the lyceum students arrived at a very important conclusion: Students' dialogue with a teacher occurs in the situation when they share a common professional interest. It could be said that the students and the teacher supervising their practice were united by a professional intercultural dialogue. In the lessons of the Latvian language in the elementary school where the lyceum students had their practice, they got acquainted with the methodology of teacher's work, with the techniques helping teachers to reveal the specific features of the Latvian culture: traditions, celebrations, and songs. The lyceum students had to help the school teachers prepare for classes: to collect materials, draw, sing songs in the Latvian Language for the children. They engaged in a creative professional communication with the teachers, the content of which was Latvian culture. Thus, there occurred the transformation of the educational cognitive activity into a professional one; interest in teacher's profession became the leading factor of cognitive motivation.

Communication with teachers was of particular importance for the lyceum students. While dealing with common problems, they communicated as colleagues. It was very important that the students felt exceptional interest and trust in the teachers whom they worked with during the practice. This cooperation enriched the students, broadened their

pedagogic experience and social contacts; besides, the dialogue became the principal form of communication. There appeared a need for communication; there were developed communicative skills, self-control, and tactfulness.

There were identified four “scales of communication”: “plus - interest, minus - nervousness”, plus - feedback, minus - aggressiveness, plus - optimism, minus - affection, plus - foresight, minus - liking”. This is a kind of a communicative ideal which became a guideline for the lyceum students in their own self-development.

There was a great interest in the joint conference of students’ research work of the Russian and French lyceum. The majority of students in the French lyceum are Latvians, and Latvian is the principal language of instruction. There was carried out considerable preparatory work in order to organize the conference. Common creative work was a good basis for the development of the intercultural dialogue between Latvian and Russian students. There also arose willingness to continue this tradition in the future.

Among senior students, there could be observed a need to deepen their knowledge and understanding of their own and other cultures, as well as the need to substantiate their emotional attitude to various cultures.

The experience gained in the activities described above promoted the development of a positive attitude to the state; there appeared a desire to participate in the social life and to obtain the Latvian citizenship. For many senior students this was a very important issue.

Most importantly, working with children and communicating with the teachers as colleagues helped the students understand themselves, determine their own life calling and their future. Confidence in their calling and the choice of their profession created a positive attitude to their future. This could be considered as a citizen’s position.

The analysis of the results of the initial experiment showed a low level of developed socially-significant values, including citizenship. The experimental teaching made it possible to change students’ views on citizenship and develop the awareness of intercultural dialogue and citizenship as a value.

Conclusion

The significant result of the conducted pedagogical research is the definition of subjective basis of citizenship development.

It is the system of student’s core values with the emphasis on student’s positive attitude to intercultural dialogue. In Latvia intercultural dialogue is an important component of citizenship. The significant result of the conducted pedagogical research is the model of study process based on intercultural dialogue organization and formation of student’s positive attitude to intercultural dialogue.

The study of the issue concerning the development of citizenship in the educational process was determined by the practical importance of this issue for the development of active creative personalities. The object of research is directly related with a whole complex of significant social issues: the choice of a profession, the improvement of relations among people, the development of the intercultural dialogue.

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