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## **Pedagogical conditions for the development of citizenship for senior secondary school students in Latvia**

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### ***Abstract***

*The existing model of education in Latvia does not facilitate the development of active citizenship. It is based on a knowledge-centred approach with examination marks being the main criterion of learner's success. However, research suggests that the development of citizenship is possible on the basis of a humanitarian model of education, with value-oriented relationships at the core and a key criterion for learners' success being self-realization in various forms of activity. The purpose of the paper is to determine the objective and subjective conditions for the development of citizenship for senior secondary school students, to work out the structure of citizenship and to examine the effect of life values on the development of citizenship for senior secondary school students. Research was carried out in 2 educational institutions: a lyceum and a polytechnic. 120 participants aged 17-18 were involved over a period of two years. The development of citizenship is regarded as the aggregate of the following qualities: civic responsibility, tolerance and European identity.*

***Keywords:*** *the humanitarian model of education, citizenship, attitudes*

### **1. The Subjective principles of the development of citizenship**

The development of citizenship for senior secondary school students is connected with the development of central psychological new-formations at the period of youth. Lev Vygotsky considers the new-formations of the age period of youth as the leading factors in the development of personality, the ones which determine the specific features of this development (Vygotsky, 1991).

According to Vygotsky and many of his followers (Elkonin, 1991, Kon, 1982, etc.), one of the new-formations referring to the period of early youth is readiness for individual self-determination. It is the discovery of an individual 'self,' the awareness of one's inner world. The self-awareness of senior secondary school students undergoes changes. Self-awareness refers to the ability to be aware of oneself, one's knowledge, interests, inclinations, ideals, motives and one's place in the society.

When characterising the period of youth, Erikson uses the terms identity and self-identity. Erikson defines this concept as the subjective feeling of constant self-identity, i.e. individual's conformity to oneself (Erikson, 1996).

Youth is the age period which implies active interaction with other people in the process of education and communication. According to Vygotsky, the central new-formation of the period of youth is the readiness of senior secondary school students for social self-determination. The readiness for social self-determination includes moral and civic position, the sense of social responsibility, the abilities and skills needed to cooperate with others and establish emotional contact in communication, as well as cultural identity.

This is also the period when senior secondary school students think about the choice of their future profession. Students' readiness for professional self-determination is also one of the central characteristics of this age period. A positive attitude to work, the acquisition of certain work skills, the choice of one's profession – these are integral components in the development of personality. This idea is also supported by Havighorst. According to him, the preparation of the youth for professional career is the main development task (Havighorst, 1972). A very important factor is the unity of subjective inclinations and individual's ability for certain activity. However, inclinations and interests are also formed and changed in the process of activity.

Consequently, the formation of citizenship is based on the development of central psychological new-formations of the period of youth. The closer and deeper is their interrelationship, the higher is the level of the development of citizenship. Therefore, we consider the age period new-formations as the subjective basis and condition for the development of citizenship.

These conclusions were the basis for studying the essence and structure of the civic awareness of senior secondary school students.

## **2. The essence and structure of citizenship**

There is a view in academic literature that civic awareness is a formation not related to ethnicity since there are practically no countries in the world with 100% mono-ethnic population (Neimatov, 2002). This also refers to Latvia. Therefore, we also consider civic awareness as a formation not related to ethnicity. We are all the citizens of this country, and we have one common goal – the prosperity of this state. Scholars regard civic awareness as an integrative personality feature, including inner freedom and respect for the state power, the love of one's motherland and one's self-actualization in professional activity for the good of society (Neimatov, 2002).

In the last decades the content of this concept has been enriched by new ideas. This is due to the social and political transformations in Europe: the establishing of the European Union, Latvia's accession to the European Union, and the formation of the common European space. As a result, such notions as civic responsibility, tolerance, cultural identity and European identity have become increasingly topical. New views concerning the content of civic awareness result from the increasing importance of national unity in preserving the security of the state. This idea was announced by the Latvian Prime Minister Valdis Dombrovskis in his annual speech on national security in the Latvian parliament on 31 January 2013. Dombrovskis presented convincing

arguments for the idea that it is necessary to preserve national unity to strengthen the security of the state. In view of this, the understanding of civic responsibility has also changed. The Latvian professor Chehlova considers civic self-awareness as an integrative characteristic of personality, as the unity of civic responsibility and the culture of cross-national communication, which manifests itself in the feelings of patriotism and creative work for the good of the Latvian society ( Chehlova, 2006).

Most of the contemporary psychologists include the following components in the structure of civic self-awareness:

- the cognitive component (knowledge, notions about the state and the awareness of oneself as its citizen);
- the axiological component (the system of views and values);
- the behavioural component (the realization of oneself as a citizen in the society, in cross-national communication) (Ginzburg, 1994).

Each of these components has its characteristic features; at the same time, they all are interconnected and interrelated in actual functioning. This integration of the components of civic self-awareness enables young people to adapt to the changing conditions of their life activity. Based on the structure of civic self-awareness, we have singled out three integrative components of civic self-awareness, the aggregate of which determines the civic self-awareness of senior secondary school students: civic responsibility, tolerance and European identity. Each of these components is an integrative formation as well, based on social values.

We believe that civic responsibility is based on the attitude towards the state as a value. Tolerance refers to the attitude towards other as a value, while European identity is based on the attitude to the diversity of cultures in Latvia and in the world as a value. Civic self-awareness facilitates the development of competitive personalities in the European labour market.

### **3. Studying the development of citizenship among senior secondary school students**

#### ***3.1. The aim and the programme of the experiment***

Within the framework of the present study, we carried out an establishing experiment. The aim of the experiment was to study the development of civic self-awareness of senior secondary school students: to study civic responsibility, tolerance and European identity. The following methods were used in the experiment:

- \* a survey
- \* a discussion
- \* testing
- \* mathematical statistics

The experiment was carried out in the 12th form of Pushkin Lyceum, with 60 students participating, and in Riga State Technical College, where the number of participants was also 60 students. The experiment was carried out for two years.

### *3.2. Studying the characteristics of civic self-awareness*

#### *3.2.1. Civic responsibility*

In order to study this characteristic, there was carried out a survey (Questionnaire No1 'Where do you intend to study and work, in Latvia or abroad?') (Golovaha, 1988).

The analysis of the results of the survey showed that most senior secondary school students are planning to work abroad – 55%, while 45% intend to work in Latvia. Consequently, the trend of emigration among young people is continuing this year as well [Since regaining independence and Latvia's accession to the European Union, about 700 000 people have left the country looking for jobs and better life opportunities.].

The respondents intend to study in various countries depending on their interests and the knowledge of languages. The analysis of the results of the survey showed that in Latvia senior secondary school students have little interest in social and political issues. Their top priorities are personal well-being and interest in their professional career, while social activity remains in the background. This is due to the fact that in Latvia the economic situation is not so prosperous as abroad. The rate of unemployment is about 15% and about 40% of the population live on the verge of poverty in Latvia. This is the main obstacle for students' self-realization in Latvia. Apart from that, the funding which the system of higher education receives from the government is insufficient; there are not enough state funded places in the institutions of higher education and low grants. Most students pay for their studies.

Social orientation in the choice of a profession and the realization of one's abilities for the sake of society turned out to be the lowest priority – 10%. Professional choice depending on the prospects of finding a well-paid job is constantly rated highly – 90%. Thus, the analysis of the results of the survey demonstrates insufficient development of civic responsibility among senior secondary school students.

#### *3.2.2. Tolerance and readiness for cross-national communication*

Our interest in the development of tolerance was due to the transformations having taken place in Europe: the creation of common educational space and the single European labour market.

We believe that the development of tolerance among senior secondary school students is based on the attitude to other as a value. In order to study this issue, there was used the questionnaire 'The attitude to other as a value' (Dubrovina, 1987). The authors analysed the concept of tolerance proceeding from the principles of tolerance adopted by the UNESCO's General Conference in 1995.

The analysis of the survey questionnaires showed that sport sections and interest clubs are the main forms of activity where the representatives of different nationalities

cooperate. In the process of collaboration, 90% of the representatives of different nationalities have excellent or good relations. 10% communicate only with the representatives of their own nationality due to the insufficient knowledge of another language (Russian/ Latvian).

We wanted to find out what TV programmes senior secondary school students watch, and whether their preferences depend on their language knowledge. 75% of the respondents watch TV programmes irrespective of the language: entertaining programmes – 35%, feature films – 25%, and sports programmes – 15%. Only 25% of the respondents prefer to watch TV programmes in their native language – Russian/ Latvian.

The analysis of the survey results showed that 60% of senior secondary students demonstrate ethical and humanistic orientation in their relations with other people. There can be observed a benevolent attitude to people, readiness for the dialogue, and the perception of other as a value, the display of tolerance in the relations with other people, and the ability to understand and forgive. 40% of the respondents display tolerance in the relations with other people, but they are not always ready to forgive. These conclusions also resulted from the discussion with many senior secondary school students.

### *3.2.3. European identity*

We believe that the basis of the European identity is the attitude to the diversity of cultures in Latvia and the European Union as a value. This idea concords with David Matsumoto's theory on cross-cultural communication. In the book 'Psychology and Culture' (2002) he presented the factors of cross-cultural communication, the realization of which determines effective cross-cultural communication.

In the present study, there was used the method of testing and the test 'Your life priorities' (Golovaha, 1988). The analysis of the results of testing showed that senior secondary school students demonstrate high scores with regard to their striving to be educated, cultural, respected people and their wish to have an important place in society, which will make them competitive not only in the territory of Latvia, but in the whole European Union. There were 75% of such individuals among the respondents. We were particularly interested in their attitude to the culture of Latvian/ Russian people and to the diversity of cultures in the European Union. The analysis of the results showed that senior secondary school students have a high level of interest in the diversity of cultures of the European Union. This is due to the fact that in the lyceum they study various languages, i.e. Latvian, Russian, English, French, German, Spanish, and Latin. The students have the need to deepen their knowledge and notions on their own culture and other cultures (75%). They have acquired the styles of social behaviour and understand that the cross-cultural dialogue is natural and essential for cross-cultural interaction.

### *3.2.4. The final analysis of the research results*

The results of the establishing experiment showed that civic self-awareness is not sufficiently developed among senior secondary school students. We believe that this has

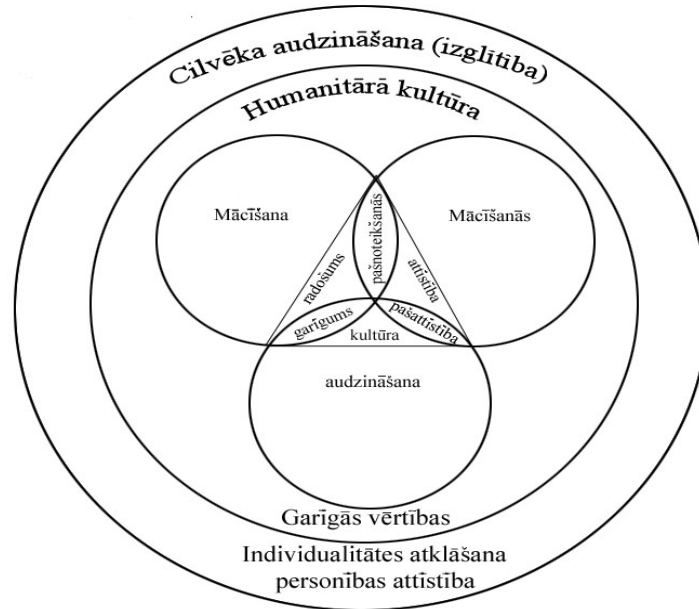
been caused by objective conditions: the difficult economic situation in Latvia, the high rate of unemployment, the lack of jobs corresponding to the chosen profession, and the fee-charging system of higher education.

Subjective conditions also play an important role: the insufficiently developed readiness for social self-determination, low interest in social and political events; there were low scores concerning the social orientation in one's professional choice for the sake of society. The existing organization of the educational process does not promote the development of citizenship among senior secondary school students.

#### **4. The humanitarian model of education as a condition for the development of citizenship**

The analysis of the results of pedagogical experiment lead to the conclusion that for the development of citizenship among senior secondary school students it is necessary to change the existing cognitive model of education. His model is focused on the development of knowledge and skills rather than on the development of the whole personality. The humanitarian model of education worked out by M. Chehlov facilitates the creation of the humanistic environment in an educational institution. Humanitarian culture is the content basis for the humanitarian model of education. It is the humanitarian culture as the system of values that forms the foundation for the development of an individual. Knowledge acquires humanitarian nature if it is personally meaningful for a student. The humanitarian model was implemented in the educational process in Pushkin Lyceum. The development of individual, social and professional self-determination of senior secondary school students as the basis of citizenship is most effective in the process of specialized education. In this case education becomes individually oriented. Specialized education creates broad space for the self-determination of senior secondary school students as it involves the interconnection of various forms of creative activity.

Figure 1: The humanitarian model of education



*Legend Figure 1*

Cilvēka audzināšana (izglītība)	Individual's education
Humanitārā kultūra	Humanitarian culture
Mācīšana	Teaching
Mācīšanās	Learning
Radošums	Creativity
Pašnoveikšanās	Self-determination
Attīstība	Development
Garīgums	Spirituality
Pašattīstība	Self-development
Kultūra	Culture
Audzināšana	Upbringing
Garīgās vērtības	Spiritual values
Individualitātes atklāšana/ personības attīstība	Revealing one's individuality/ the development of personality



## Conclusion

In the present article, there were analysed the subjective and objective conditions for the development of citizenship among senior secondary school students.

The subjective conditions refer to the development of key new-formations of the period of youth: readiness for individual, social and professional self-determination. There were determined key trends in the development of citizenship. The development of tolerance and European identity as the components of citizenship is at the optimum or high level. This is connected with Latvia's accession to the European Union and the desire of senior secondary school students to study and work abroad. The development of civic responsibility needs improvement. This is due to the difficult economic situation in Latvia and the existing cognitive model of education.

The pedagogical conditions for the development of citizenship for senior secondary school students are as follows: the transformation of the cognitive model of education, the development of the new humanitarian model, the organization of the process of education based on the humanitarian model.

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