

## **International Approaches to the Development of Cross-Cultural Education at High School**

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Marina Panteleeva was born in 1986 in Kazan, Russian Federation. In 2001 she entered Teacher Training College where she received diploma with honors and qualification to teach English at school. In 2010 Marina Panteleeva graduated from Tatar State University of Humanities and Education and received her specialist degree in foreign languages. She finished the University course with honors and received qualification of teacher of English and French. She continued her training and now she is still in progress with her PhD work at the Department of General and Social Pedagogy, Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University. Her major study area is theory of education (comparative education). The topic of her research work is titled: "Modern Strategies and Technologies of Intercultural Competence Formation at the Secondary School in the USA".

Since 2008 Marina started to work as an English Teacher at school of foreign languages called "Speaking Planet". She taught intensive courses of English language for individual and corporate clients of Elementary, Pre-intermediate, Intermediate, Upper-Intermediate and Advanced levels.

Marina was given the Assistant Professor position at the Department of Foreign Languages, Kazan State Finance and Economics Institute in 2010-2012. Her area of responsibilities included practical classes of Business English for the students from Faculty of General Economics, Faculty of Management, Faculty of Finance and Credits and Faculty of the Economy of Enterprise; short-time English courses for the students of Intermediate level and she was also engaged in the program "Interpreter in Business Communication" where she taught practical English classes for the students who received their second education in Business English. Within her work period in KSFEI she was involved in organization of seminars, training courses, conferences and Olympiads among students. She took part in the development of the teaching programs for the second course students.

Marina Panteleeva continued her career in Kazan National Research Technological University at the position of Assistant Professor in the Department of Foreign languages for Professional Communication, Kazan National Research Technological University. Her area of responsibilities includes English classes with the BcS students and training courses for university professors. She is engaged in work of Department of Foreign Languages for Professional Communication where she teaches a course of Interpretation.

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Artem Bezrukov graduated from Kazan National Research Technological University (KNRTU) in 2007. His major program was Chemical Engineering. He has also a minor degree in Translation for Professional Communication. Artem Berukov received his PhD in chemistry at the same university in 2010. His is the head of Protocol Office at International Affairs and an associate professor at the Department of



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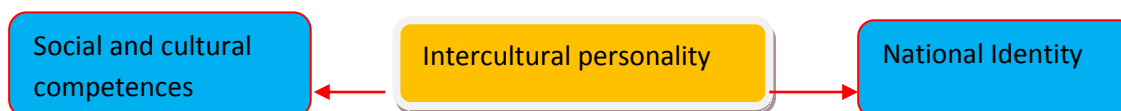
# International Approaches to the Development of Cross-Cultural Education at High School.

## Background

Modern world is changing its shape in the conditions of globalization that influence all the spheres of human activities: industrial, scientific, economic, political, and educational. The peculiarities of the modern society are reflected in an explicit integration process. In accordance with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) data, nowadays there is no mono-ethnicity left in the world. Polyethnicity and migration processes increase internationalization and integration in diversified society of the countries. All the processes result in social tension and conflicts that occur between different ethnic and cultural groups. The main reason of this tension is ignorance of ‘aliens’ that causes hostility and disbelief. Eastern wisdom says: «People negatively treat what they do not know”. Thus, nowadays of primary importance is to provide people with greater knowledge about cultures different than their own.

At all times, education is considered to be the main tool to reduce strains in society. In the rapidly developing world it becomes necessary to prepare the younger generation to life in an intercultural environment, to educate them in the spirit of respect to other nations, to understand different cultures and to be comfortable with intercultural dialogue. A complex process of individual formation can be gained through enlightening education by cross-cultural content. Russian and foreign researches believe that intercultural education provides every learner with the cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to efficient functioning in the life of society. James A. Banks stated that “ethnic, cultural diversity is a positive element in a society because it enriches the nation, gives individuals more opportunities to experience other cultures and thus to become more fulfilled as human beings”<sup>1</sup>. The aim of cross-cultural education is to provide the learners with “global awareness – an integrated worldview”, necessary to achieve active and full participation in society and, as a result, to form “intercultural personality”.

Nowadays much attention is paid by the scholars to the development of the context of the intercultural education. In this paper different approaches to the cross-cultural education are considered for high school students who are already in Russian and American institutions. Possibilities and requirements for the education of high school students who would soon become adults and employees are explored and it was found that the individuals with high intercultural sensitivity and comfortable in global interactions were in high demand in the international labor market and can succeed in any kind of global business<sup>2</sup>.



Adolescence is the most favorable period for the development of an intercultural personality and the global mind-set for a multicultural environment. Defining the place in the society is a very important factor that indicates personality development: I am the high school student, I am the citizen of my country, I am the citizen of the world. Leading Russian innovators in pedagogics state that the high school students strive to penetrate in the subject matter of the

civil life. As the frames of multicultural interaction broaden, the larger the intercultural experience and the wider socio cultural environment becomes. The high student's thinking in these conditions becomes more generalized, abstract and critical and they are able to formulate and process the alternative hypothesis and analyze their thoughts. At the end of high school, the cognitive processes become so developed that the students are ready to perform the same activities as grown-ups, including the most difficult ones<sup>3</sup>.

In accordance with the Federal State Educational Standard of high school education of the Russian Federation and UNESCO Guidelines on Intercultural Education, the ordinary high school student brought up in multicultural society must have a worldview based on a dialogue with other cultures, a heightened tolerance and awareness, a behavior appropriate to the environment and self-development in accordance with human values and ideals of the cultural media.



In order to successfully achieve the indicated above goal – to prepare students for responsible national and global citizenship in an increasingly interconnected world and developing their cross-cultural sensitivity and understanding---it is important to study the main approaches used in intercultural education and consider their practical value relating to the obtained results. This paper covers the best practices of Russian and American scholars in this area as well as provides two examples of implemented high school courses, one in the Republic of Tatarstan, a part of the Russian Federation and the second, in the state of Pennsylvania, USA. These regions represent a large diversity of ethnical groups and was considered to be a solid experimental platform.

Cross Cultural Education in Tartarstan, Russia

Improving intercultural education by including a cross-cultural educational model is part of the multicultural education development program of developed in 2011-2020 plan proposed by the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation relating to the Republic of Tatarstan. This republic has a diverse demographic comprising 52% - Tatars, 39.49% – Russians, 3.35% - Chuvash, 0.64 – Udmurts, 0.39 – Bashkirs, 0.26 – Azerbaijanians, and others which demands full integration cross-cultural elements in the educational curriculum. The present approach integrates intercultural education into the context of such disciplines as Foreign Languages, History, Law, and STEM. In Russian literature this approach is called ‘module education’.(S. Davydov and L. Suprunova)<sup>5</sup>. ‘Modules’ are portions of information or activities to form social, intercultural and professional competencies. The central objective is to create the conditions in which the high school students can be involved in the cognitive activities. Thus, the module education should be based on the dialogue of cultures and include special forms of mentor-student and student-student collaborations. In this context, the integration of reproductive and interactive training such as role-games, business-games, brainstorming, discussions, creative tasks, and projects are of great practical value for the high school students.

The module education approach was reflected in the design of the interdisciplinary course applied by teachers in the Kazan high school, Republic of Tatarstan. The modules are realized in separate disciplines as well as being included in training courses and extra curriculum work. The main advantage of this approach is the use of creative student group activities. Taking into consideration the desired cross-cultural competent standards, the following intercultural education topics are emphasized:

1. “Global problems of the modern society. Culture, cultural value and cultural identity
2. “Technological breakthrough in the context of globalization”
3. “Ethics of communication in the modern society”
4. “Outstanding international scientists”
5. “Tolerance as an essential quality of an individual and a specialist in the modern society”
6. “Specialist of the 21st century”.

Using the “Specialist of the 21st century” as an example, this theme can be integrated as a module in the engineering disciplines. The purpose is to form self-determination, global and social awareness, and decision making through the social interactions within a group of high school students through the completion of the following steps. In the first stage the students consider the Russian and foreign research experience (collect the information using electronic educational resources). In the second stage – they share their experience with the group in roundtable discussions, disputes, and brainstorming. In the final stage they make a report on their vision for the image of the specialist in modern science and technology.

It is important to note that this educational module is a logically completed part of the discipline content with corresponding skills and knowledge control that appropriate to its level. At the end of the group work activities on the topic, the students were asked to complete a survey that includes the following statements where they had to give positive or negative responses for each item: “I understand the importance of cross-cultural

communication as it provides large experience”; “It is interesting to interact with the representatives of different cultures while making joint work”; “I feel convenient to work as a group”; “I attentively listen to the opinions of other people and feel confident in what I say and suggest”; “I consider it important to receive knowledge about other culture representatives as I develop my personality”; “productive and competent interaction with the representatives of different cultures will enlarge my experience and facilitate my choice of future profession”. The results show that 95 % of students responded positively to all the questions in the offered questionnaire.

This “module approach” has proven effective in giving high school students the experience of collaborating as a group, searching for joint group approaches, sharing their experiences, stating, analyzing, and solving the problem. Under this situational approach the teacher involves the students in the cognitive process so they are able to construct their own knowledge about the main global issues and the teacher positions himself as an organizer, partner and consultant.

#### Cross Cultural Education in Eastern Pennsylvania, USA

A similar, sustainable and more complex approach to intercultural education is implemented in the American high school system which that engages students in direct cross-cultural competence (CCC) experiences. This approach got the name ‘cross-cultural competence approach’ (CCCA)<sup>6</sup>. This approach broadens cross-cultural education into practical applications and situations involving different kinds of cross-cultural experiential learning global projects in engineering and business areas.

This approach has practical implementation in the American institutions in Pennsylvania. It should be noted that the development of increased multi-ethnic, multi-cultural awareness is critical to this area where large Middle Eastern, Latin American, Mexican, German, and Portuguese communities exist. The north-eastern part is often called “Pennsylvania Dutch”. The largest ethnic groups are: Germans (28.5%), Irish (18%), Italians (13%), Afro-Americans (11%), English (8.5%), Polish (7%). A large number of programs exists in the region where the students are able to develop their intercultural skills, to explore the intersection of ethnicity, culture and society and improve their discussion and performance skills.

In this paper the special summer program is described that is based at regional Pennsylvania universities including the University of Pennsylvania and Lehigh University and in which schools from the region accept the candidates on a competitive basis. These summer mentorship programs are usually short-termed (4 weeks) and aimed at providing professional and intercultural experience through various activities. Talented students from diverse ethnic groups have to complete the course of lectures within one month period and do a collaborative project work.

The main advantage of this approach is that there is no need to provide case studies or simulations for the students during their studies since the demographics of fellow students creates the multicultural mix. Residential summer programs aim at making the students explore international diversity, developing team building skills, getting them acquainted with the community services, developing leadership skills while working within the culturally diverse environment, enhancing their knowledge in different fields (ex. business and industry), learning global practices, and plunging into various interaction sessions and activities.

The guiding principles followed in the programs are: dignity, diversity, acceptance, respect, civility and sensitivity to others, personal liberty and individuality. The most important theme is the pursuit of unity – to build and maintain a culture that is founded on the base of solidarity and respect. The program combines the courses of studies and free time activities that make it entertaining, complete, logically structured and consistent.

1) Core and elective courses are aimed at developing global understanding, practical skills in Business and Industry and encourage identity formation. The following topics are presented to the high school participant by the university professors and executive speakers:

- The Global Mindset
- Ethics
- Cultural sensitivity
- Assertive expression
- Going Global
- Executive experience exchange
- Workplace success
- Win-win negotiating
- Strategy in the Globalization Era, and etc.

2) Project work activities include working as a group according to the scheduled time and given topic, dividing responsibilities within the group members, generate the ideas through the joint discussions, making a presentation and final report.

3) A wide variety of activities within the group of students are implemented by the residence life coordinator and mentors. The first stage in the culturally diverse environment of students belongs to “ice breaking exercises” that may include: self – introduction (the students share some unusual things about themselves), a game “Detect the Truth”, residence floor meetings and discussions on the topic “Diverse Family Tradition”, filling in the board with wishes and program expectations, make the list of residential rules to follow, creating the poster “New World of Friendship”. These are only examples of the many activities included during the program.

Team-building activities are necessary to be executed for the further group work under the project. “Survival exercises” is a form of joint work where the students receive a task that needs to be solved in a fixed timeframe. The role of the mentor is to divide the responsibilities within its members and to observe how the group succeeds.

The program comprises other activities as well: dorm activities: campus tours, birthday celebrations; fun/outdoor activities: talent show, dancing, alumni visitors, field trips, sport events, games: “Capture the flag”, movie night, cultural night, traditional cuisine; educational trips: community services; creative work activities: hand-made centerpiece (product advertising), trifold, and etc.

The described above course helps to bring a real world cross-cultural learning experience into the classroom. Each activity creates the opportunity to discover the diversity and cultural identity. The students are engaged cognitively in the process and research work. While implementing the project, students have to interact with the group members (usually 5-6 members in a group), university professors, local communities and managers from different organizations and are involved in direct social experiences. Over the course of the program, admitted high school students gain first-hand experience in academic disciplines (business, engineering).

Cross-cultural competency and global awareness are formed due to their practical expertise they receive by plunging into the diverse environment. The learning media is designed in a way when the students reflect on their experience and can process personal reflections collaboratively in the multicultural group of students sharing their views and ideas.

The role of the mentor in these program activities is reduced to a team and personal advisor. At the beginning he “communicates expectations” – let the students know the program rules, divide the roles within the group members. During the program he facilitates student independence and action, encourages the students to find the required information and analyze it, promotes students on-task behavior, and makes them follow the time framework. Thus, all the efforts are aimed at developing “multicultural persons”.

The research shows that, in group work activities the students are open-minded and maintain a positive promotive attitude with little psychological tension as everyone discusses project issues. The final results of the joint project work are observed in the end-of-course presentation provided by the students.

This intercultural approach to the programs applied in Pennsylvanian institutions are constructed on the principles of equity and humanism. The success of the program is strengthened by the thousands of alumnus who continue in their communities communicating and share their results. The graduated students become interculturally competent: they possess strengthened cultural consciousness and positive cultural identity, well established intergroup contact, as they make friends with the group-members, reduce prejudice regarding representatives of different ethnic groups, respect and appreciate cultural diversity. They acknowledge that they face the global challenges and are well prepared to become the active participants of the modern society.

## Conclusion

New approaches in cross-cultural education have proved to be efficient in formation of intercultural individual. American experience which capitalizes on the inherent diversity of the participants from the region can be adapted to a variety of projects that are applicable in the Russian high school programs where the cultural sensitivity is integrated into the disciplinary content. Consideration of the successful foreign expertise will definitely be of high practical value for both countries. Theoretical background together with the modern practical approaches can bring the possibilities together and lead to the creation of joint courses that will be of great demand in global intercultural platform and attract new students for participation.

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