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Prospective primary school teachers' education for tolerance through interactive training methods in extracurricular activities of high school

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Abstract. The article aims to investigate the role of high school in students' education for tolerance that is considered a professionally meaningful for them quality and a key to a successful intercultural communication in today's multiethnic, multireligious, multilingual, and multicultural world. At the same time, it is stressed that high school is a social institution within which tolerant consciousness and behaviour of students, namely prospective primary school teachers, can be successfully formed through different meaningful and structured extracurriculars. The research also examines the semantic aspect of the concepts "tolerance" and "extracurricular activities". Accordingly, tolerance is defined as a valuable attitude to people, regardless of gender, race, nationality, language, social status, religion, political views, and cultural identity. Extracurricular activities is determined as students' activities which fall outside the normal curriculum of an educational institution, are generally voluntary, and are organized and conducted with some participation of mentors. The results of the current study demonstrate that implementing teaching diversity and education for tolerance into the process of extracurricular activities is closely tied to the development of critical and creative thinking skills which help students solve conflicts collaboratively and successfully, fight biases and prejudice. It is also proved that an efficient methodology need to be applied to develop just mentioned skills and educate students for tolerance. This objective can be achieved through variation use of interactive training methods, like role playing, debates, case studies, synectics, symposia, brainstorming, colloquia, talk shows, virtual tours, and research activities. Certain pedagogical conditions adherence to which the effectiveness of students' education for tolerance in the process of extracurricular activities depends on are mentioned.

Keywords: *high school, education for tolerance, critical thinking, creative thinking, interactive training methods, extracurricular activities, prospective primary school teachers*

Problem setting. With its ultra-high speed and information technologies the modern world is becoming extremely close and accessible for us, we live in a virtual "global village" side by side with people different in race, nationality, language, social status, religion, and cultural identity which inevitably lead to misunderstanding, intolerance, disrespect, discrimination, and interpersonal confrontation which penetrate all spheres of social life. Intolerance both leads to misery for the people of the affected groups and, at the same time, denies to everyone opportunities to learn about others' cultures, languages, and ideas. Consequently, it is quite common to emphasize the need for tolerance in the multicultural world of today.

High school as a social institution that implements public order on the education of the younger generation for specific cultural values and beliefs, actually has to tackle the task of forming high quality professionals, in this case primary school teachers, able to navigate in a multicultural world, to understand its values and meanings, to interact effectively with members of other professional societies, both domestically and internationally, on the basis of mutual understanding and mutual respect, and tolerance.

It must be mentioned that teaching diversity and education for tolerance of prospective primary school teachers is quite not an easy but complicated process. Being a democratic value and having social roots, tolerant consciousness is formed gradually, from day to day. And the process will be effective when provided coverage of all kinds of students' activities. We firmly believe that within high school tolerant consciousness and behaviour of learners can be formed through different extracurricular activities.

Analysis of recent achievements and publications. Having analysed a great number of educational, philosophical, sociological, psychological, and methodological sources we have found that the problems of humanity and lenience have bothered minds of not a few scholars since the ancient civilization. Pythagoras, Parmenides, Tertulli-

an, St. Augustine, Erasmus Roterodamus, M. Luther, J. Locke, Montesquieu, J.J. Rousseau, I. Kant, C. Helvetius, J.G. Fichte and others meditated on the harmony of human relations, justice, equality, and happiness. Later, various aspects of the younger generation's education for tolerance were studied by M. Berdiaiev, M. Bakhtin, P. Florensky, V. Soloviov, V. Sukhomlynskyi, K. Ushynskyi, K. Jaspers, S. Frunk, J.-P. Sartre, J. Dewey, J.S. Mill, J. Rawls, C.R. Rogers, A. Schweitzer and others. Currently, the problem of education for tolerance is being investigated by V. Zolotukhin, A. Asmolov, I. Ziaziun, I. Bekh, O. Dokukina, S. Bondyrieva, D. Koliesov, V. Maralov, V. Sitarov, R. Valitova, S. Ter-Minasova, B. Hershunskyi, O. Savchenko, M. Waltzer, O. Hoffe, S. Mendus, M.F. Gülen and others.

However, analysis of scientific sources lets us claim that even although the abovementioned problem has been investigated rather comprehensively, such aspect as prospective primary school teachers' education for tolerance in the process of extracurricular activities of high school has been given insufficient attention.

The objective of the article. The purpose of our study is to underscore the role of high school in students' education for tolerance, to analyze the semantic aspect of the concepts "tolerance" and "extracurricular activities" on the material of some lexicographical sources, to determine the interactive training methods which may be used as effective means of prospective primary school teachers' education for tolerance in the process of extracurricular activities of high school and to provide an organizational discourse and case study of some of them.

The statement of the fundamental material. Revealing the problem of prospective primary school teachers' education for tolerance in the process of extracurricular activities of high school, it is above all necessary to understand the meanings of its key notions, namely "tolerance" and "extracurricular activities".

Having analyzed a number of lexicographical sources of different linguistic cultures, we may note that "toler-

ance” is quite a controversial concept and up to date there is no common understanding of the phenomenon, for the meaning of the concept “tolerance”, as of any other concept, is ambiguous and has various connotations in different linguistic cultures due to the historical experience, verbal and non-verbal behaviour peculiarities, and the system of traditions and spiritual values of a certain nation. The general understanding that representatives of different linguistic cultures have on tolerance is as “willingness to accept or allow behaviour, beliefs, customs etc, which one does not like or agree with, without opposition” [4, p. 1418]. Thereby, we understand tolerance as a valuable attitude to people, regardless of gender, race, nationality, language, social status, religion, political views, and cultural identity.

Now, we will define what is meant by the concept “extracurricular activities”. A brief historical review indicates that although the term appeared only in the late 19th century, different kinds of extracurriculars have been used from the antiquity. In particular, Harry C. McKown noticed that many of them even in quite modern form were to be found in ancient schools. Athletics, music, oratorical competitions, student participation in government, clubs, debating, dramatics, special day celebrations, public programs, and honor awards and societies were well established in Athens and Sparta in support of regular education [5, p. 1]

The modern understanding of the term is given in different lexicographical sources. Thus, “Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English” defines “extracurricular” as an adjective that is “outside the regular course of work or studies at a school or college: *She’s involved in many extracurricular activities, such as music, sport and drama.*” [1, p. 427]. We have found out that “Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture” gives the same explication but adds that “these activities are usually free, and allow students to follow their own interests while using the facilities of their place of study” [4, p. 456]. In this manner, we may sum up that extracurricular activities (ECAs) pertain to students’ activities which fall outside the normal curriculum of an educational institution, are generally voluntary as opposed to mandatory classes, and are organized and conducted with some participation of mentors.

We believe that students who participate in meaningful and structured ECAs would have significant benefits. Students become involved in extracurricular activities not only for entertainment and enjoyment purposes, but most important, to gain and improve skills, build confidence and self-esteem, learn the values of teamwork, individual and group responsibility, to make new friends, gain a sense of community. Moreover, ECAs provide a channel for reinforcing the material learned in the classroom, offering students the opportunity to apply their academic skills in a real-world context, and are thus considered part of a well-rounded education. Again, ECAs are activities, within which it is, to our mind, possible to teach diversity, to form tolerant consciousness and behaviour of students, specifically prospective primary school teachers, that is indispensable for living in a multicultural world.

This paper is limited in its scope and therefore we will observe only some of extracurricular English activities which students are offered at Pedagogical Institute of Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University and research on several

training methods which obtain the greatest potential in teaching students different cultures, developing their linguistic competence, improving their intercultural communication skills, and educating them for tolerance.

Among ECAs to mention there is *service learning* that “integrates community service with academic study to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. Service learning is designed to increase interest, autonomy or self-direction, relatedness, and competence” [6, p. 5-6]. Once a week prospective primary school teachers conduct free English lessons for children aged from 4 to 9 who are members of the club “Let’s Speak English!” that is organized within the social project called “With Kyiv and for Kyiv” being implemented by Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University. Participating in this kind of ECAs helps students to see the value of what they are learning in the English related classes, builds students’ character, develops them personally and socially, increases civic engagement, and connects them with their community. At the same time, service learning strives to teach students diversity and educate them for tolerance by involving children of different age, nationality, religion, stratum of society.

The other kind of English ECAs set up at the Institute is the *students’ scientific club* «Language and Area» the main goals of which are to form English sociocultural competence of prospective primary school teachers and improve their intercultural communication skills. Through the curriculum content and teaching materials students get acquainted with modern lifestyle of English-speaking countries that includes national symbols, national character, national stereotype, religion, the division of society into classes, traditions, manners, culture, art, life of young people, youth organizations, media, environmental protection and the like. A discussion on any of these topics might easily lead into a conversation about multiculturalism. A. Kamra and D. Wood in their research have noted that too often multicultural education focuses on what makes people different and thus works against stated goals [2, p. 119-127]. Consequently, in discussions and other kinds of work we endeavour to highlight the similarities amongst people from diverse cultures rather than differences that is a more effective way to promote understanding, respect, and tolerance.

One more kind of ECAs worth mentioning is the *students’ debating society* “The Wisdom of Heart”. David G. Lawrence in his research on procedural norms and tolerance divided the responses to questions related to tolerance into two categories: soft issues and hard issues. The scholar defined soft issues as those that did not arouse strong feelings, while hard issues were those in which strong emotions were involved. He found education was a small factor in the tolerance of an individual on soft issues, such as pollution. However, on harder issues, such as legalization of marijuana or racial discrimination, he found a strong correlation between tolerance and higher education [3, p. 86-89]. Hence, the content of the curriculum and the materials for various activities contain information on history, religion, culture, customs, traditions, conventions, social stereotypes of different nationalities and cultures as well as a wide range of urgent social and global issues of the modern world: social inequality, human rights and obligations, juvenile delinquency,

domestic violence, premarital sex, abortion, euthanasia, religious problems, stem cell research, slavery, substance addiction, child suicide, prejudice and discrimination, racism, terrorism, capital punishment, immigration and globalization and a great many of other topics related to tolerance and diversity. Thus, we aim at the development of the skills and values essential to felicitous personal life and prosperous career, such as problem solving through critical thinking, evaluating personal opinions critically, conflict prevention and conflict management, the skills of good listening, negotiation, compassion, cooperation, and treatment people politely, acceptance of various cultures, development of tolerant consciousness and behaviour.

Implementing teaching diversity and education for tolerance into the process of ECAs one should take into consideration that bringing up of a tolerant generation is closely tied to the development of the skills of critical and creative thinking. Therefore, let's elucidate what critical and creative thinking mean.

On the whole, *critical thinking* represents an exercise that lasts for the whole life. While thinking critically, a person tests his own assumptions and biases. Together with compassion and mutual respect, critical thinking makes foundation for tolerance. Critical thinking is necessary for developing students' skills which help them solve conflicts collaboratively and successfully. Absence of critical thinking makes it impossible to fight biases and prejudice and makes intolerant behaviour prevail.

It should be pointed out that the educators mostly use logical thinking while teaching. But it would be much more productive when logical and critical thinking were used together. In case of logical thinking the problem is known beforehand, but in case of critical thinking the problem needs to be revealed and defined. In case of logical thinking the conclusion is made from the two prereq-

uisites. There can be only one correct decision; although in case of critical thinking it is possible to find several right ways for solving the problem.

Critical thinking makes students to have their biases and assumptions questioned and tested that in turn facilitates development of tolerance. There are five main characteristics of critical thinking: critical thinking starts from problem identification and its acknowledgment; obtaining of information is a starting point of critical thinking and not its final result; critical thinking is an independent thinking; critical thinking strives for sound argumentation; critical thinking is social thinking.

Apropos of *creative thinking*, we may say that it is the skill of looking at different events in a new way and finding a new, original way for problem solving. The distinctive feature of creative thinking is to find new linkages among ideas. Creative problem solving skills will definitely help students overcome difficult situations which might occur in their life, again both private and professional. Time and again, creative people are described as self-assured people of strange character who change their moods often. However, regardless of this, creative people never share prejudices and do not think in a trivial way. This is why the people of creative nature are tolerant [8, p. 3-5].

It should be noted that an efficient teaching environment and methodology need to be applied in the process of ECAs that will promote students' free thinking and develop their independent problem solving skills. This can be achieved, in our opinion, through interactive training that is a contemporary educational system based on the principles of humanism. The interactive training methods which are systematically used during the structured sessions of both the students' scientific club «Language and Area» and the students' debating society «The Wisdom of Heart» are presented in *Figure 1*:

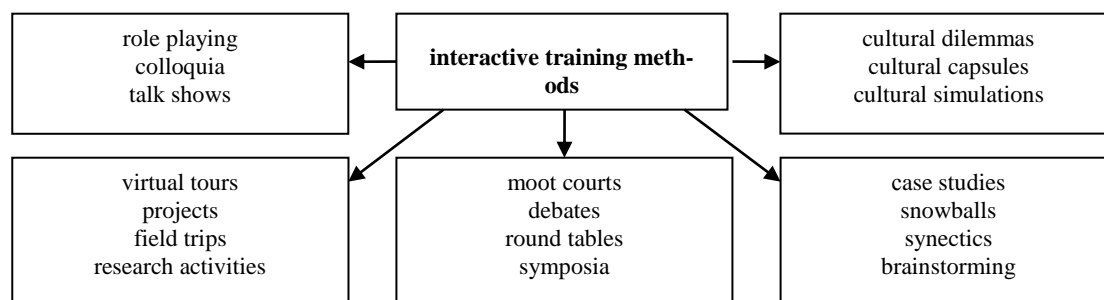


Figure 1. Interactive training methods

As we see above, there are so many methods to be fostered in the ECAs environment to aid the process of student's education for tolerance, of which these are just a mere few demonstrations of. Within the article we will discursively overview only some of them, namely case study method and debating.

Debating is an extracurricular activity that can be much fascinating for students, particularly if to pick topics that are close to their hearts and life experience. When a student is passionate about a given topic and is required to compete for a distinction or prize, this can help reduce stage fear that even the most confident performers can suffer from. And it is very beneficial for his/her future career as if he/she starts to feel nervous, shaky, or even completely debilitated at the thought of performing in front of an audience, that is a class of primary school stu-

dents, he/she might fail in teaching. Additionally, as part of the debating team, a student may come across as more confident and may be able to improve his/her English communicative skills in a seemingly effortless fashion. The group of students can be divided into two teams or one group can be pitted against another to create a sense of competition. The topics for this activity can be given in advance, permitting the students to prepare a written speech or a project beforehand. By and large, debating can be interesting, enriching, and something the students will look forward to. Furthermore, debating promotes communication and advocacy skills, improves self-confidence, encourages critical and creative thinking abilities, educates for tolerance.

Case study method is a learning technique that is either based on real events, or area construction of events which

could reasonably take place. Cases tell a story, one involving issues or conflicts which need to be resolved by students – though most case studies do not have one obvious or clear solution, like those ones of abortion or euthanasia. The information contained in a case study might be complex (including charts, graphs, and relevant historical background materials) or simple – a human story that illustrates a difficult situation requiring a decision. A survey of faculty and students at Harvard Business School found that what engages students most in a case is that it tells a story: “a good case presents an interest provoking issue and promotes empathy with the central characters. It delineates their individual perspectives and personal circumstances well enough to enable students to understand the characters’ experience of the issue. The importance of the compelling issue and the empathetic character reflects the fact that cases typically focus on the intersection between organizational or situational dynamics and individual perception, judgment, and action” [7, p. 1]. Some studies and personal observations have shown that this method can help mentors involve their students more fully in discussions of the topics related to social and global problems and multicultural issues. Case studies can provide a rich basis for developing students’ problem solving and decision making skills as well as for educating them for tolerance. Cases can help organize and bring to life abstract and disparate concepts by forcing students to make difficult decisions about complex human dilemmas, herewith often more than one dilemma can be presented through the same case study.

Finally, it must be added that the effectiveness of students’ education for tolerance in the process of ECAs depends on adherence to certain pedagogical conditions among which are a mentor’s pedagogical tolerance; variation use of interactive training methods; providing each student’s activity and feedback that must be argumentative, informative, personalized, and imaginative; ensuring the consistency and continuity of the process of education for tolerance.

Conclusion and the prospects of the above research.

Thus, we are of the strong opinion that high school is a social institution within which tolerant consciousness and behaviour of prospective primary school teachers can be formed through different meaningful and structured extra-curriculars. Active participation in ECAs is expected to provide much benefit to students as it can help them acquire a greater cultural awareness, improve listening and speaking skills, build confidence and self-esteem, learn the values of teamwork, individual and group responsibility, obtain a sense of community.

We have also come to understanding that implementing teaching diversity and education for tolerance into the process of ECAs we should take into consideration that bringing up of a tolerant generation is closely tied to the development of the skills of critical and creative thinking. Together with compassion and mutual respect, critical and creative thinking make foundation for tolerance. Critical and creative thinking is necessary for developing students’ skills which help them solve conflicts collaboratively and successfully while their absence makes it impossible to fight biases and prejudice and makes intolerant behaviour prevail.

The results of the current study indicates that an efficient teaching environment and methodology need to be applied in the process of ECAs to promote students’ free thinking and develop their independent problem solving skills. This objective can be achieved through curriculum content rich in multicultural and controversial issues and variation use of interactive training methods such as role playing, manifesto, debates, case studies, synectics, symposia, colloquia, talk shows, virtual tours, research activities, etc.

Another study that could be useful to conduct would be one that investigated high school students’ education for tolerance in different countries of the world. The approaches to education for tolerance in Ukraine and abroad could be compared.

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Синельник И.П. Воспитание толерантности будущих учителей начальной школы посредством интерактивных методов обучения во внеаудиторной деятельности высшей школы

Аннотация. В статье исследуется роль высшей школы в воспитании толерантности студентов, которая считается профессионально значимым для них качеством и ключом к успешной межкультурной коммуникации в современном полиэтническом, многоконфессиональном, многоязычном и мультикультурном мире. В то же время, подчеркивается, что высшая школа является социальным институтом, в рамках которого возможно успешно формировать толерантное сознание и поведение студентов, а именно будущих учителей начальной школы, в процессе различных структурированных видов внеаудиторной деятельности. Исследован также семантический аспект понятий «толерантность» и «внеаудиторная деятельность». Соответственно, толерантность определяется как ценностное отношение к людям, независимо от пола, расы, национальности, языка, социального статуса, вероисповедания, политических взглядов и культурной идентичности. Внеаудиторная деятельность определяется как деятельность студентов, отличная от учебной, базирующаяся на добровольной основе, и такая, которую

организуют и проводят наставники, принимая в ней некоторое участие. Результаты данного исследования показывают, что реализация обучения разнообразию и воспитания в духе толерантности в процессе внеаудиторной деятельности тесно связана с развитием навыков критического и творческого мышления, которые помогают студентам решать конфликты совместно и успешно бороться с предубеждениями и предрассудками. Доказано также, что с целью формирования вышеуказанных навыков и воспитания толерантности студентов необходимо применение эффективной методологии. Эта цель может быть достигнута посредством вариативного использования интерактивных методов обучения, таких как ролевые игры, дебаты, кейс метод, синектика, симпозиумы, мозговой штурм, коллоквиумы, ток-шоу, виртуальные туры и научно-исследовательская деятельность. Упоминаются некоторые педагогические условия, от соблюдения которых зависит эффективность воспитания толерантности учащихся в процессе внеаудиторной деятельности.

Ключевые слова: *высшая школа, воспитание толерантности, критическое мышление, творческое мышление, интерактивные методы обучения, внеаудиторная деятельность, будущие учителя начальной школы*