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FORMATION OF MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE OF STUDENTS BY MEANS OF COUNTRY STUDIES PROJECTS

Scientific problem definition and its significance.

Multicultural education for young people is an essential part of education, especially today, when in the middle of Europe the threat to the peaceful coexistence of the fraternal peoples has arisen. When people are dying every day, the word “peace” becomes not an abstract concept, but thus the necessary condition of living.

There is a need to teach young people of the art of negotiation, to live in peace and cooperation with the representatives of different countries and peoples. It is always more difficult to come to the agreement, than to carry on the war. There are many spectators and supporters, but not many effective helpers and reliable partners.

In practice, civilized world requires professionals who have the extensive knowledge of cultural diversity in a global scale, are able to build connections, create favorable conditions for cross-cultural interaction. Therefore, the important feature of students’ training, especially future experts in the international sphere, is to develop fundamental knowledge about the multicultural world that is the key to peaceful coexistence and international security.

Huge role in the formation of the multicultural competence of students is given to the country studies courses, which are able to form a perception of the integrity of the world. Great importance is played by country studies project activity,

which provides the invaluable experience for the understanding of cultural diversity of countries and cultures.

Therefore, the formation of multicultural competence of students by means of country studies projects are extremely important part of the learning process, especially in the context of training in the field of international activity.

Analysis of the latest researches and publications.

The question of the competence approach in education, professional competence, and multicultural competence is the research subject of plenty of foreign and Ukrainian scientists. Most researches are conducted in the field of teaching staff professional competence (H.Ball, Y.Vardanian, H.Hordashevskaya, I.Ziaziun, Y.Klimov, N.Lalak, E.Rohov, N.Serhiienko, A.Shcherbakov and others). The questions of the training of future social workers in terms of multiculturalism are considered in the studies of O.Hurenko. The research of V. Kalinina is devoted to the formation of the professional competence of the future teacher of foreign language by mean of cultures dialogue. The multicultural competence as a subject of current pedagogical research is highlighted in O.Osypenko works, and is the part of a creative development of the expert - in the works of D.Chernilevskyi. The works of O.Zelenska are devoted to the formation of military schools cadets' multicultural competence.

Today the formation of multicultural competence of students, including the students of international departments by means of country studies projects, is not completely disclosed.

The purpose of this article is to study scientific and methodological foundations of multicultural competence of students by means of country studies projects, to reveal their role and importance.

The research main material presentation.

Multiculturalism is the main feature of modern society. Therefore multicultural competence of students, especially future experts in the field of international relations, we consider as an integral part of professional competence, which should be carried out at all stages of the professional activity.

There are many definitions of multicultural competence as a concept, its components were defined, as well as structural components. For example, R.Ahadullin considers multicultural competence as the general ability of the individual to productive living in terms of multi-ethnic and multicultural society [1].

The author of this article defines the *multicultural competence of the student* as the ability of the individual to realize multicultural competences harmoniously, having a sum of multicultural knowledge and language skills, adequately and diplomatically establish the cultural interaction process, be tolerant to people of different nationalities in order to solve the professional tasks knowledgeably. In the structure of multicultural competence of the student we distinguish four interrelated components: knowledge and informational, communicative, verbal, ethical and motivational.

Formation of multicultural competence of students as one of the key professional competencies is carried out throughout the whole period of study in higher educational institution, including the study of country studies courses.

The Country Studies - one of the basic subjects, in which the formation of multicultural competence of future experts in international relations and “Tourism” field of study is carried out effectively. Extremely effective is the use of new approaches to the study of the course. The method of projects is one of such methods.

While the studying of Country Studies the project method is used in the preparation of *creative works* as one of the most effective forms of individual scientific and research tasks during the accomplishment of students’ self-reliant tasks.

By the students of international relations field, the training of whom is carried out for over ten years at “KROK” University, Kyiv, the creative works were done during the first two academic years, when there was the study of “Country Studies” course. The purpose of training is to expand and deepen students' knowledge of subjects while the accomplishment of self-reliant task. To date, scientific and methodical recommendations on the creation of creative works were developed, in

which their purpose, objectives are defined, the types (country studies imagery, country studies routes, mini-reports, comprehensive country studies data) were developed, stages of preparation were offered, features of design and evaluation, public defense, ways of practical implementation of the results were disclosed [2].

Creative works are the effective basis for the formation of multicultural competence of students of international field. The best, what is performed by the students, is to reveal the topics of cultural and socio-cultural nature. According to public opinion polls – it is one of the most popular types of learning activities of students, which also has the positive impact on the performance.

During the implementation of such a project as a creative work the most effectively the following components of multicultural competence, as knowledge and informational and ethical and motivational are formed.

Further development of accomplished projects is going on by the several ways: participation in scientific conferences, as the material for term papers and dissertations writing, extensions and presentation of the themes on the country studies meetings, festivals, round tables, etc.

The powerful country studies projects in extracurricular activities of students, who actively contribute to the formation of multicultural competence, are the projects, which are related to the *country studies educational festivals*.

At “KROK” University for several years the project “*Country Studies Educational Festival “Dialogue of Cultures”*” for partner schools, students and young people, within which the following festival events occurred: “Dialogue of Cultures: Africa” (March 11, 2011), “Dialogue of Cultures: Latin America” (November 25, 2011), “Dialogue of Cultures: Europe” (December 3, 2012), “Dialogue of Cultures: Asia” (February 17, 2014) are actively promoted. The participants of each event are more than 300 people. In March, 2015 the conduction of the fifth festival “Dialogue of cultures: America, Australia and Oceania” is planned.

The aim of the festival is to introduce young people to the peculiarities of cultures, promote the formation of personality on the basis of tolerance and mutual

respect to other cultures and peoples. The objectives of the festival are: 1) to familiarize the participants with various aspects of cultural country studies features; 2) to promote the formation of personality on the principles of friendship and respect between peoples; 3) to develop the understanding of global interdependence of all countries and peoples; 4) to develop the communicative skills, promote the ability to communicate with people of different nationalities; 5) to develop the creative potential of the person, as well as skills that contribute to increase knowledge about the other cultures; 6) to promote a sense of beauty in the best achievements of world civilization [3].

In the organization and conduction of the festival the students take an active part, especially students of international relations field, who prepare the information booths, presentations, welcome guests, conduct the sessions, organize the workshops etc. The main sessions' moderators are those students, who have the positive mark of the course "Country Studies" and are ready to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and abilities in practice.

During the conduction of four country studies festivals 29 sessions, representing 84 countries, 14 workshops and 4 creative studios were held.

On workshops and creative studios the festival event participants have the opportunity to get acquainted with the cultural diversity of the countries and peoples of the world in a practical context. To their conduction the culture-bearers, embassies, consulates, foreign guests and experts are usually involved.

As the practical experience shows, in the organization and conduction of the educational festivals on the basis of voluntarism, usually 80-90% of students, who are studying or have studied the subject "Country Studies", take part. It should be noted that a number of students continues the festival activities, even being the graduates.

In general, we emphasize, that the participation in the country studies project festival activity contributes primarily to the formation of strong communicative and ethical and motivational components of multicultural competence. In addition, there

is a possibility to strengthen and deepen the speech component, as well as knowledge and informational.

The analysis of the above mentioned information allows us to formulate the following **conclusions**.

Multicultural competence of the students is a component of the professional competence.

Country studies projects, namely: creative works and country studies educational festivals are the effective basis for the formation of multicultural competence of students.

Multicultural competence, as well as other types of professional competence of students, is formed throughout the whole period of study in the higher educational institution, and its' means and methods of formation can be improved and developed in general.

Country studies educational activity of educational institutions on the study of cultures of countries and nations can guarantee the peace and stability in the world if it gains the global scale and is supported by conscious individuals, world progressive society.

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