

## Multicultural Education of the U.S.A in Fundamental Legislative Acts

*Ivan Stepanovich Bakhov*

Inter-regional Academy of Personnel Management, Kiev, Ukraine

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**Abstract:** In the present article the author actualizes the role of multicultural education for the modern society, characterized by exacerbation of ethnic conflicts, intolerance to cultural differences. The history of multicultural education in the USA is substantiated and grounded by the national legislation acts starting from the 1950-s of the XX-th century. Theoretical points of multiculturalism have been analyzed from the point of view of the analysis of legislative acts.

**Key words:** Multicultural education • Legislative acts • Amendments • Educational institutions • Ethnic groups

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### INTRODUCTION

The task of preserving security in the contemporary society requires continuous work on studying the nature of conflicts between different ethnic groups, their influence on the social and economic life and on finding ways to overcome them. All this is proving serious challenges for education, which cannot stay apart from reactions to events in the society.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Experience of foreign countries, the USA in particular, shows that educational institutions are the principal structures which conduct purposeful uniting and peacekeeping policy. Hence, education at all levels of society can help bring up youth in the spirit of humane attitude towards members of other cultures and to find effective ways to reduce inter-ethnic hostility, which may be applicable in the social environment.

Modern pedagogical reality demands, on the one hand, to take into account ethno-cultural factor in education, on the other-to provide conditions for learning other cultures, upbringing tolerant relations between people belonging to different ethnic groups, religions, races.

Problems of tolerance in different areas of private and public life, as well as its antipode-extremism, are particularly actual to the situation of many countries,

which is marked by bitterness of manners among certain population groups, the spread of aggressive impulses and actions, fueled by both objective socio-economic difficulties and the policy of certain groups who are interested in fueling illegal sentiment.

Thus, in the USA multicultural education and upbringing were a democratic answer to the needs of the multinational population of the country.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As a consequence of profound political, demographic and social changes in the American society and in the world, which occurred in the second half of XX century, assimilation policy has not justified itself. It was replaced by the realization of the importance of ethnic diversity as a prerequisite for cultural wealth and stability of the country. Tolerance and diversity have become benchmarks for the XXI century (World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance Durban, 31 August - 8 September 2001) [1]. In this regard, the world pedagogical thought began developing corresponding educational strategies. The task of preparing young people for life in a multiethnic and multicultural society was named one of the main challenges in documents of the UNO, UNESCO and the Council of Europe (Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on

Religion or Belief adopted by the UN General Assembly on November 25, 1981.) [2]. The World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted in Vienna in June 1993.) [3, 4], UN General Assembly Millennium Declaration adopted in New York on 18 September 2000 [5], Declaration and programme on education for democratic citizenship based on the rights and responsibilities of the citizens adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg 2000 [6], Strasbourg Declaration on Higher Education and Democratic Culture: Citizenship, Human Rights and Civic Responsibility of 23 June 2006 [7].

The report of the UNESCO International Commission on global strategies for the development of education in the XXI century emphasizes that the one of the most important functions of school is teaching people to live together, to help them transform the existing interdependence of nations and ethnic groups in conscious solidarity. To this end, education should contribute, on the one hand, that man realized his roots and thereby could determine the place he occupies in the world and on the other, to teach him respect for other cultures.

Also in the report of the UN Commission on Human Rights was accentuated the leading role of education in the development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Education, as highlighted in the report, shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society and promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic and religious groups [2].

Article 4 of the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance on education considers education for tolerance as an urgent critical challenge; in this regard it is essential to promote the development of methods of teaching tolerance on a systematic and rational basis, revealing the cultural, social, economic, political and religious sources of intolerance, acting as principal causes of violence and alienation. Policies and programs in the field of education should promote mutual understanding, solidarity and tolerance among individuals and between ethnic, social, cultural, religious and linguistic groups and nations. Hence education is becoming today one of the major forces contributing to the survival and development of people, not only in separate countries, but also in the world in terms of global anthropogenic problems of ethnic conflicts.

Many migrants seek to adapt more quickly in the new social environment, as well as help their relatives to

settle down in a new place. At the same time they are psychologically attuned to not “get lost” and not assimilate to the “another” people. Hence the emergence of contradictions in their efforts: the desire to adapt is added by aspirations of the separatist character aimed at preserving their ethnic community as an independent cultural unit.

This situation resembles the immigration processes of U.S. in the second half of the XX, when the ideology of the “melting pot” lost its actuality and each newly arrived migrant no longer tried to become a “hundred percent American,” but instead, sought to preserve his linguistic, religious and cultural identity. Change at this stage in the history of America, we analyzed this peculiarity and related processes in our earlier materials (Bakhov 2013) [8].

Multiculturalism is the most modern response to cultural diversity in the United States. This model is a compromise between assimilation and cultural pluralism position. J. Banks, the leading theorist of multicultural education, describes a multicultural society in which individuals are free to act according to the norms and values of their ethnic group as long as they do not face the overwhelming national idealized values such as justice, equality, human dignity [9].

Lack of housing and jobs converted migrants in a social group with a very low income and strangled rights and interests. Migrants need help from the authorities and a friendly treatment by the local population. This problem must be taken into account in educational activities.

Particular significance in the adaptation of migrants and a tolerant attitude education is played by the host education system. Teaching tolerance in terms of multi-ethnicity, multilingualism, multiculturalism and multi-mentality can give the education a multicultural nature.

Multiculturalism recognizes the new changing nature of the modern society. Moreover, it is a practical response to the demographic and cultural changes in the society, which are both its strength and weakness. The founders of multiple concepts and theories of US Multicultural Education Christine Bene, James Banks, Ricardo Garcia, Sonia Nieto, Christine Sleater, Carl Grant and Margaret Gibson have been developing ways of introducing multiculturalism into educational practice. At one time they started with relatively simple technologies; currently strategies in multicultural education are rapidly changing and improving.

In the U.S., main documents that contributed to gaining the multicultural education the status of the leading educational policy of the country include:

- The US Supreme Court decision to desegregate the school environment (1954). Historians called the 1950-1980-ies the period of returning blacks their rights, which were included in the federal constitution in the 60-70s of the XIX century. (prohibition of discrimination on grounds of race in various spheres of social life) [10].
- The Civil Rights Act (1964) and the Voting Rights Act (1965), prohibiting race discrimination in schools, in employment and housing, and participation in the elections [11, 12]. The Voting Rights Act was revised in 1975 to provide in 24 states bilingual ballots because of the wide spread of Asian languages and dialects among the population.
- The Bilingual Education Act (1968), the document was revised in 1974, 1978 and 1984. [11, 12].
- The Law on gender equality (1972 Title IX of the Education Amendments), which prohibits discrimination of the type in all educational institutions (especially in admission to higher education), as well as in employment [13].
- Resolution of the first Commission on multicultural education (1972), created at the American Association of Teachers College, confirmed the need for multicultural teacher preparation.
- The Education Act for children with alternative development (1975) Education for All Handicapped Children's Act, guaranteeing all children aged 3-21 years with peculiarities in development, free and quality education. [14]
- National Council for Accreditation of teachers added multicultural education to their standards (1976), stressing that each educational institution should by 1981 enter multicultural education in all teachers training programs for obtaining accreditation [15].
- The Education Act on assistance for homeless children and youth (1987) McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act) [16].
- The Education Act for persons with particular development (1990) [17].
- Amendments to the above law (1997)-Individuals with Disabilities Act Amendments) [18].
- Inclusion of multicultural component in the educational standard as a mandatory.

Over the past half century, the U.S. multicultural education was reflected in number of federal laws, which confirms the fact that the Government was has supported the establishment and development of multicultural education, making it the main focus of the state education policy. This analysis emphasizes once again that the problems of education can not be addressed in isolation from the problems specific to any multicultural society (discrimination in all forms of expression, poverty, family problems, etc.).

No less significant role in the formation of US multicultural education played the Standards for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, formulated by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education- NCATE, according to which all educational institutions were required to implement courses and programs for multicultural education in teacher training. These standards have been upgraded and re-released in 1987, 2000 and 2002 [19, 20].

Many politicians and education scholars in the United States believe that in the embodiment of the idea of a multicultural education in practice it is much more important to consider various approaches to this problem than to follow the same models. Different approaches to the idea of multicultural education reflect different values and different understanding of the concept. Concept of multicultural education, as reflected in their values and beliefs define the basic content and concepts, the emphasis and studies. Concept of multiculturalism can be seen as a framework for the organization based on their practice of multicultural education and they need to understand clearly at the planning stage. Accordingly, the synthesis multicultural concepts may include their basic ideas and positions and obvious need to implement these approaches in practice.

## CONCLUSIONS

Analysis of the legislative acts of education on the history and development of American multicultural education suggests that this process is characterized by a rather evolutionary changes in the field of training and education (i.e., gradual, continuous, quantitative) rather than revolutionary (indigenous, qualitative) changes. In other words, at each successive stage, the enrichment and further development of these achievements.

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