

Professional and personal development of students in a modern university in a cross-border setting

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Abstract. The article presents the results of theoretical and experimental research related to the identification of heuristic possibilities of interaction between cross-border universities in the professional and personal development of students. It is shown that a comprehensive account of these opportunities in the educational process of a university operating in a cross-border environment is an important factor in the development of a student as an individual and professional at the current stage of society and the higher education system.

Keywords: higher education, professional and personal development of students, heuristic possibilities, university, cross-border university

1. Introduction

In the era of radical innovative transformations taking place in various spheres of society, there are high-quality new requirements for the professional and personal development of students at a contemporary university. This development should be characterized by permanent positive dynamics, identification with the image of future professional activity, focus on achieving high results in the profession, gaining a humanitarian culture, a new style of professional thinking, competitiveness, creativity, etc.

The professional and personal development of students at a contemporary university has become the subject of research conducted by Andrienko, E. V., Artyukhina, A. I., Zeer, E. F., Bakanova, I. G., Ershova, N. G., Lushnikov, I. D., Makeeva, V. S., Podymova, L. S., Rayskikh, N. T., Slastenin, V. A., Smolyar, A. I., etc. The efforts of these and other scholars focus mainly on identifying the dynamic characteristics of students' professional and personal development, certain characteristics of the course of this process among students of various training areas, stages of professional and personal development, the conditions in which this development takes place, etc.

At the same time, an important factor in the professional and personal development of students at transboundary universities turned out to be eliminated from the field of scientific research. Under the conditions of a steady globalization trend, an objective need for integration in various areas of cross-border regions is increasing in the world, including between the universities located in these regions. There is no doubt that the value potential of this kind of cooperation in a transboundary environment and its implementation largely have a serious stimulating effect on the following points: on the professional and personal development of students, their value-sense, motivational areas, way of thinking, competence. In general, it determines the readiness for professional activity.

Analysis of scientific publications in the context of the stated problems suggests that contemporary scientists have not yet sufficiently disclosed the heuristic possibilities of cross-border cooperation of higher educational institutions in the professional and personal development of students. Thus, there is a contradiction between the need to comprehensively take into account all the factors contributing to the professional and personal development of students at a cross-border university, including the interaction possibilities of cross-border universities, and insufficient knowledge of these opportunities and features of their implementation in pedagogical science.

This contradiction allowed us to formulate the problem of research, which is to find the answer to the next question: What are the heuristic possibilities of interaction between universities that function under the conditions of a cross-border area in the professional and personal development of students?

The aim of the study was to identify the heuristic possibilities of interaction between cross-border institutions of higher education in the professional and personal development of students and to optimize the process on this basis.

2. Materials and Methods

The methodological basis of the research is the philosophical statements about the activity, the creative essence of the personality and its multifactorial development; dialectic of the general and the particular; the emergence of opportunities and their transformation into reality, as well as the following methodological approaches: systemic (Blauberg, I. V., Kuzmin, V. P., Yudin, E. G. and etc.); cultural (Bondarevskaya, E. V., Dneprov, E. D., Zinchenko, V. P., Kolesnikova, I. A. and etc.); axiological (Bezdukhov, V. P., Zdravomyslov, A. G., Rozov, N. S., Slastenin, V. A., Chizhakova, G. I., Shiyanov, E. N. and etc.); personal activity (Vygotsky, L. S., Zimnyaya, I. A., Leontyev, A. N., Rubinstein, S. L., Serikov, V. V., Yakimanskaya, I. S. and etc.); dialogic approach (Bakhtin, M. M., Bibler, V. S., Buber, M., Gadamer, G. G., Lotman, Yu. M. and etc.).

A fundamentally important conclusion for our study were scientific works devoted to the problems of the internationalization of higher education (Agranovich, M. L., Guryanova, T. N., Dudareva, N. A., Larionova, M. V., Saginova, O. V., Fatkhullina, L. Z. and etc.); intercultural education (Vygotsky, L. S., Astafurova, T. N., Dmitrieva, G. D., Malkova, Z. A., Payk, J., Selye, N., Hickson, J., Chernov, L. I. and etc.); intersocial education (Gamova, N. A., Leshner, O. V., Talanchuk, N. M., and etc.).

The study used the following set of methods: methods of a theoretical level (analysis of scientific literature and the synthesis of key positions of the authors); methods of an empirical level (diagnostic methods for determining the degree of tolerance of the individual of O. I. Tushkanova, survey, observation).

The Altai State University as an international research and education center focused on the transboundary Asian region, made an empirical base of research. 85 teachers and 374 university students participated in the study.

At the first stage of the research search, our efforts were focused on identifying opportunities for cross-border universities to interact in the professional and personal development of students. Based on the analysis of the scientific literature devoted to various aspects of the problem under study, we came to the conclusion that current research by scientists is an important prerequisite for identifying and justifying such possibilities. As a result of a theoretical experimental study, we have identified the capabilities of a university operating in a cross-border setting in the professional and personal development of students. At the same time, we proceeded from the fact that the content of interaction between the cross-border universities can be diverse and cover various forms and directions of their activities: joint international educational and scientific projects, the implementation of online educational programs, academic mobility of students, etc. This content implicitly contains the following opportunities for students' professional and personal development:

- Acquaintance with the culture and traditions of various peoples and countries forms a special type of thinking based on the awareness, acceptance of universal human values, and the solution of any life and production problems from the standpoint of values that are "universal, higher values acceptable to all people, regardless of social affiliation, have an inter-social nature, an

inter-social nature” [1]. Such values proclaim “recognition of humans as the highest value on earth, respect for representatives of another nation, nationality, human culture, understanding of interconnectedness and interdependence of the economic and economic life of the world community, moral unacceptability of wars as a way to solve international problems, responsibility for preserving the surrounding ecological environment” [1], and others;

- Acquaintance with a different culture is accompanied by the development of students' inquiring activity as “the first sign of a thinking person” [2]. M. M. Bakhtin also pointed out this fact, “Contact with any cultural object becomes interrogation and conversation, that is, dialogue” [3]. The formulation of such questions, as well as the search for answers to them, play a serious role in shaping the students' systemic vision of professional reality; they are an important condition for self-knowledge and understanding of another person who is from a different culture;
- Under conditions of cultural diversity, the need for dialogic communication is born. In this regard, we are in solidarity with scientists who assert that the “dialogue is communication with culture, realization, and reproduction of its achievements, detection and understanding of the values of other cultures, a way of appropriating the latter, the possibility of removing political tensions between states and ethnic groups. It is a necessary condition for the scientific search for truth and the process of creativity ...” [4];
- In interethnic relations of students studying in the transboundary universities, a powerful value potential is laid for the education of the most important personal qualities: tolerance, respect, mutual aid, empathy, mercy, etc.

The creation of a criteria-based assessment framework was important for achieving the targets of the study. The following criteria have been identified as the leading criteria for identifying the level of professional and personal development of students at a cross-border university:

- A systemic vision of professional reality in the multicultural world;
- An ability to think globally, act locally;
- Readiness for intercultural dialogue;
- A tolerant behavior towards other cultures;
- A reflexive thought direction in a cultural diversity situation.

Based on the use of survey methods, survey, direct and indirect observation, we concluded that the level of professional and personal development of students at a cross-border university was low according to the above criteria. The results of our empirical research show that in the course of interaction with representatives of a different culture, the students (97.1%) practically do not consider it as an opportunity to “draw” new experience from this culture, enriching future professional activity, expanding the boundaries of the professional picture of the world. Most of them (89.8%) do not have “feelings of involvement in universal human problems” [5], responsibility for solving universal human problems. Accordingly, they do not have the ability to think globally based on universal human values. In the process of observation, we recorded the absence of behavior in this group of students that adequately reflects the nature of such thinking. In 85.4% of all participants, relationships with foreign fellow students are often not accompanied by tolerance, the desire to provide them with real assistance in the first years of student life, in various educational and extracurricular situations. As a rule, these relationships are characterized by poor diagnosis, they lack any solid understanding in relationships, proceeding from an initial position of adopting various views, ideas, phenomena ... ” [6]. When students of a cross-border university got to know another country, its traditions, customs, and culture, they did not activate reflexive processes related to the need for in-depth self-understanding, increased manifestation of patriotic feelings, etc.

The results of a survey of teachers of a cross-border university, observations of their activities show that they do not possess the necessary system of knowledge about the capabilities of a university operating in a cross-border area in the students' professional and personal development and, therefore, do not realize the educational and developmental potential of cross-border interaction.

The organization of a special experimental work related to the compensation of this gap in the educational practice of a cross-border university has produced the following results.

3. Results

Strengthening the humanitarian component in the content of higher education, considering any issues of science and culture from the standpoint of the “human dimension,” a special, human form of attitude to the world, other people, building this content in the context of the dialogue of cultures formed the ability of students for intercultural dialogue. This formed among the students an understanding of the importance of solving global problems from the standpoint of this dialogue, with the help of joint collective efforts created the conditions for the development of a culture of tolerant behavior in the relations between Russian and foreign students, gave rise to a sense of oneself as a member of the world community solving the tasks of the world and regional level on the basis of universal human values.

The content of university education in a transboundary environment was the task of structuring the educational material, as it was in any other ordinary universities. However, quite often, tasks reflecting a particular typology were collective in nature. On the one hand, such a didactic structure required the combined efforts of students in the process of solving problems. On the other hand, she prepared them not so much for individual (as it is the case in traditional education), but for real professional activity, where, as a rule, collective tasks are solved, including international ones.

The use of innovative educational technologies (project method, group work, business and role-playing games, etc.) in the process of teaching Russian and foreign students was aimed at strengthening collectivist principles in educational and professional and extracurricular activities. Solving a common problem, combining efforts for these purposes to fellow students contributed to the manifestation of the students installation on mutually assisting behavior, tolerance to a different point of view, the formation of the ability to listen and hear the Other, the ability to put themselves in the place of the Other, in the position of the Other. We have recorded a phenomenon that could be described as the permeability of a person for a new experience that does not fit the usual pattern. This happened in situations where there were certain intercultural differences, different positions, and the use of the “wrapping information on oneself” technique [5] made it possible to remove the barriers that arose, ensuring the adoption of different views and traditions.

It should also be noted that in this kind of a joint activity, many students had important socially valuable needs. These needs were due to the action of the well-known psychological mechanism associated with the transition of emotions from the signal of satisfaction (dissatisfaction) of the need for a new need, when the execution of any educational task, for example, by students from different countries and nationalities and having different levels of skills to perform a joint task, was motivated at first only by dictating a duty related to the timely and high-quality execution of this task. However, in the course of the experiment, we created situations in which the Russian students, when assisting students from abroad, experienced strong positive emotions. At the same time, they had a desire to find themselves again in such a pleasant situation. A new socially valuable need was born on this basis, associated with the provision of disinterested help to another student representing a different culture.

Of particular importance was the formation of a cross-border university in the process of learning from the standpoint of different sciences of ideas about a holistic and interconnected world, because “the world is becoming increasingly integrated, and an integral function of contemporary consciousness is the human desire to enter into dialogue with people of a different culture, to form a generalized view of the world as a whole and of oneself in it” [7]. As a result, our students formed an integral world view, which undoubtedly would allow them in the future to take an adequate position in the modern multicultural world as a subject of intercultural dialogue.

4. Conclusion

The results of the study of the students' professional and personal development at a modern university in a cross-border area indicate the importance and relevance of this problem. Since its results determine the holistic nature of the ideas about the various characteristics of the student as a person and professional, they form another perspective on addressing the identified problem from the standpoint of the processes of internationalization of higher education taking place today.

The results of our study also convince us that the cooperation of cross-border universities carries an important educational and developmental potential, and its actualization in the educational process has a significant impact on various substructures of the student's personality, thereby developing it in professional and personal plans. At the same time, one of the main tasks of a university teacher is to take into account this potential, carrying out the process of professional and personal development of students in a cross-border environment.

Prospects for our further research are associated with the development of psychological and pedagogical conditions that would ensure the successful transition of the potential interaction opportunities of cross-border universities in the professional and personal development of students to their current state.

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