

SCTMG 2021
International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the Context of
Modern Globalism»

INSTRUCTIONAL DIALOG AS A WAY TO FORM TOLERANCE
IN HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

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Abstract

The paper considers an important problem of modern education, consisting in formation of tolerance in students by means of instructional dialog. The practical problem is further complicated by an abundance of concepts, points of view and opinions, often irreconcilable and opposite in their content. In this context, capability of a person to constructive discussion of a problem is actualized, as well as a skill in making a rational compromise in selection of ways and methods for problem solving. The principal research methods employed were: analysis and synthesis, abstraction and specialization, modeling, observation, surveying, interviewing, conversation, studies of educational documentation, analysis of creative works and testing tasks, generalization of teaching experience, ascertaining and teaching experiments, ranking, statistical processing of data, evaluation of statistical significance of the hypothesis. Material presented in the article includes a description of research results with the purpose of elaborating and specifying the content of the tolerance concept, identifying and justifying a set of educational conditions for effective formation of tolerance in higher education students by means of instructional dialog.

2357-1330 © 2021 Published by European Publisher.

Keywords: Tolerance, conversational teaching, humanitarization, tolerance, co-transformation



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1. Introduction

Among modern Russian and foreign educators there is an ongoing debate on specifics of organizing effective educational efforts in order to form tolerance in the multicultural world. Historical development of global community may be a multi-path phenomenon, providing a possibility for selecting alternative development trajectories. The situation is further complicated by an abundance of concepts, points of view and opinions, often irreconcilable and opposite in their content. In this context, capability of a person to constructive discussion of a problem is actualized, as well as a skill in making a rational compromise in selection of ways and methods for problem solving. Practice shows that the existing system of modern education is largely oriented towards strictly structured knowledge and its reproduction, while demonstrating insufficient flexibility and excessive conservatism. At the same time, implementation of student-centered learning is possible only on condition that various competing approaches are legitimized.

2. Problem Statement

Development of the modern society is characterized with ambiguity and incoherence. In particular, societal development with its non-linearity and dynamics fell short of hopes for fast humanization and assertion of personal rights. Globalization processes did not solve the issues of aggressive nationalism, chauvinism and cultural exclusivity, based upon social intolerance of people, ethnicities and nations to each other, but it has rather become an amplifying factor for development of these ideas in the modern society. Thus, formation of tolerance shall be deemed a relevant problem not only for education domain, but for the humanity as a whole. Formation of tolerance and tenets of tolerant consciousness is one of the most important factors for successful development of a modern multicultural society.

Generalization of practical experience in formation of tolerance in students, analysis of scientific educational literature, studying of regulatory documents applicable to educational activities allowed the authors to identify the following contradictions:

- between the objective need of society in citizens adequately perceiving multicultural nature of the world and insufficient scientific and educational development of educational conditions for meeting this social mandate within the framework of modern education.

This contradiction demonstrates that it is possible to resolve the stated problem by means of conversational learning.

3. Research Questions

The concept of tolerance in its general meaning assumes knowledge about variety of the world and acceptance of its variety as objective reality. The term comes from Latin *tolerantia*, meaning *patience, endurance, perseverance*. It is specified that tolerance is permissiveness with respect to different worldview, lifestyle, behavior and customs. However, let us note that tolerance is not synonymous with either indifference, or adoption of a worldview or lifestyle of others. More like this term is related to giving others a right to live in accordance with their own worldview (Khomyakov, 2011). The main manifestation of tolerance is defined by the scholars as an ability to understand naturalness and

inevitability of difference between people and readiness to respect such differences, as well as acceptance of rights and freedoms of every person, capability to co-exist with other (different) people, ability to enter into non-violent interactions with others, that is, readiness and capability to dialog.

Due to that, the authors deemed significant to involve instructional dialog into learning process, as it allows for efficient inclusion of students into active meaning-making educational activity.

Case studies arising during the learning process may be considered a dialog, according to Bakhtin (2010), that is, an integration of a "voice" of a learner and a "voice" of a teacher. At that, learning is a meeting of society-dependent archetypes of thinking and specific (cognitive, emotional) experience of a student. During conversational meetings, "a certain enculturation" of spontaneous experience takes place, a completion of spontaneous concepts to the level of scientific ones, and, along with it, augmentation, transformation of meaning-related components of spontaneous experience, thus forming a vector of personal development.

Conversational learning shall be understood as consequently unfolding situation within interaction of educational process participants. It should be kept in mind that usually, if we talk about subject-to-subject information exchange, they are arranged in value-meaning definitions that allow for smooth perception of surrounding reality. Within the framework of such exchange, tolerance is not only being formed, but developed as well. Construction of instructional dialog is possible in parallel to a step-by-step formation of tolerance. The first stage is individual cognition. The aim of this stage is understanding oneself as other on behalf of a personality, as a thing different from others, realization of individuality, where dialogic and monologic principles are concentrated (Nazarova, 2017). It is necessary to strengthen the vector to stir interest in self-perception through dialog. At this stage, students shall define their own position. At that, solution to the problem shall not be easy, and atmosphere shall facilitate reduction of discomfort, fear of failure, activation of "propositions of possible relations". Under these conditions, it is possible to engage in the dialog even those students who are lacking self-confidence. Thus, a condition is formed for participation in the dialog. Realization of a multitude of paths to solution on behalf of students form a wish to go beyond a simple solution. This is a sign that the students are ready to transit to the next stage.

The second stage may be defined as collective-analytic one. The aim of the second stage is developing personal interest in the subject of the dialog; collectively searching for meaning, accumulating positive experience in inter-personal interactions; forming skills in search for compromise while resolving the problem. The content of this stage of the dialog includes the problem of inter-student interactions, the very form of collective work and its detailed analysis, correlation of opposing approaches and opinions. At this stage, students master necessary communications skills, learn to avoid hackneyed phrases and stereotypes in perception of different opinion, learn to acknowledge the right of others to a different position. Participating in instructional dialog, a student starts perceiving differences between a multitude of positions different from their own and ends up in a certain situation of understanding their own readiness to forfeit their own position and accept a different one if it opens new aspects in understanding of the problem. In addition, the students start realizing that interpretation of different variants of solution directly depends on value-meaning criterion, which may be different for different participants of the interaction. Let us note, that at this stage, skills are formed in comparative analysis, arguing one's

selection and discovering causation. An optimal form for organizing conversational learning at this stage is a free discussion that provides ability for exchange of opinions and facilitates acceptance of alien ideas by its very organizational democratic form.

The third stage is personal reflection. The purpose of this stage is to develop personal reflective and spiritual functions; stirring interest to the process of self-improvement and fomenting skills in self-education. At this stage, the instructional dialog is aimed at an internalized conversation of a student with oneself, at realization of one's personality content and communicating potentials. A foundation for this process shall be an actual problem without an available solution. At that stage, student cognitive activity is related to overcoming emotions, negation of opinion of others, overcoming rejection and disrespect of alien things and opinions. At that stage, a skill in collective search for an optimal solution shall be formed; this skill consists not in use and interpretation of readily available knowledge, but in independent research using critical and creative components of cognition, stimulating tolerant attitude as a necessity (Kolbysheva & Utkina, 2019). An ability to follow the logic of a different interpretation and see its assumptions is formed during this process.

Instructional dialog in the learning process facilitates formation of students' tolerance if it conforms to the principles of educational interaction: humanitarization of knowledge, openness of position, co-transformation.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify, justify and experimentally confirm teaching conditions for efficient formation of tolerance in higher education students by means of instructional dialog.

5. Research Methods

Tolerance is a social phenomenon aimed at formation of personal value vector that facilitates personal inclusion into the society, expanding and harmonizing its interactions with the world around.

Analysis of philosophical, psychological and educational studies into the phenomenon of tolerance as a personal characteristic allowed identifying its principal functions: humanitarian, identification, social adaptation.

The humanitarian function is largely aimed at formation of humanistic personal values and interests, allowing one to resist overindulgence in ideas of technocracy and cruelty. As this function integrate value foundations of other functions, it plays an important role in their system. Identification function is defined as a method to accustom a person to a certain society, correlation of one's position to a position of a certain group, creating an ability to compassion. Social adaptation function correlates personal attitudes to external environment, allowing for evaluation of one's capabilities, creating a foundation for continuous self-development and self-actualization. The identified functions of tolerance are considered by authors within the logic of their co-ordination, which consistently determine humanitarian function as the most important one, as its actualization sets the very vector for the processes of identification and social adaptation of a person during human activities.

From the above identified functions, we defined structural components of tolerance: cognitive-value-based, integrative, motivational-need-based (Mezentsev, 2015).

The conducted research allowed identifying three levels of tolerance maturity in students: intolerant, tolerating and tolerant. In order to confirm correctness of the research results, the authors developed criteria and relevant level indicators for tolerance maturity. In development of tolerance maturity criteria for higher education students, the authors employed adequate and well-tried for validity and reliability methods. Criteria for maturity of various components were defined as follows; for the cognitive-value component: self-knowledge, self-attitude, attitude to the world; for the integrative component: capacity for empathy, reliability, capacity for changing one's concept of self and the world; for the motivational-need-based component: presence of subjective motivation, need for dialog, sense of humor.

Let us provide a short characteristic of level-related difference in maturity of tolerance in students. For students with intolerant level of tolerance development the following is typical: black-and-white perception of the problem ("only my position is correct"), seeing the world with a certain amount of aggression, whether open or hidden, not perceiving any opinions different from theirs, aspiration to thrust one's opinion, lack of skills in teamwork and compromise, aspiration to emphasize one's superiority or demonstrate indifference to anybody, not seeing multiple (even evident) connections to other people.

For students with tolerating level of tolerance the following is typical: understanding a need for fruitful dialog, aspiration for contacting people around and joint search for solution, however, when a problem situation arises they often cannot see a solution; distrust of opinions of others, setting up psychological barriers, trying to acknowledge only superficial value of communication, taking a point of view of others without adequate argumentation (I think like this because I think like this).

For students with tolerant level of tolerance the following is typical: they understand evident connection with the world and others, understand their education as a task in self-development and ability to get required understanding of the world following universal human laws, may find a common language with anybody, being useful, empathic, capable of team work, even with teammates of opposite positions while coordinating roles, reinterpreting a negative situation as a positive way to truth.

Ascertaining stage of the experiment happened in the natural conditions of educational process. The results of the ascertaining research have shown insufficient formation of tolerance in students: tolerant level was shown by 9.6 %, tolerating level was shown by 25.4 %, intolerance was shown by 65 % of respondents. These results were caused by insufficient attention to the problem on behalf of the faculty.

The research assumed review of educational content and creation of efficient learning conditions, adequate to the environment to form tolerance in students during organization of the instructional dialog while studying social subjects (History, Social Studies, Russian History, Law, Economics, Culture Studies). The sample of test persons was represented by several differentiated groups of students majoring in various areas of humanities: Social Studies and Law, History, Economics and Managements (365 persons in total). The experimental group was formed by students from first to third year, majoring in Law and Law Enforcement and in Social Studies and History. The study was developing in two directions: testing of students in experimental and control groups and a prolonged study of the tolerance formation during the process of organization of conversational learning in humanities.

The research followed the logic dictated by its theoretical foundation and simultaneously served as a solution for set research objectives. Stages and levels in formation of tolerance that the authors had defined allowed determining a mechanism organizing teaching experiment, where application of each experimental technique corresponded to solving a specific research objective.

The principal stage of the research was represented by formation of tolerance components in higher education students of experimental group on the basis of organized instructional dialog while studying humanities. This stage assumed formation of knowledge, skills and abilities in conducting dialog; learning conditions were tested for formation of tolerance while preparing an instructional dialog. This stage was provisionally divided into three sub-stages:

The first sub-stage assumed educational action onto students aimed at development of their cognitive-value component. The open position principle was as important as the principle of humanitarization of knowledge. By content, this substage corresponded to individual cognitive stage in mastering of dialog.

The second substage was aimed at development of interpersonal interaction skills in students, while preserving one's own opinion. The aim of this substage was developing the integrative component of tolerance, namely, forming a capability for expanding the sphere of interaction. By content, this stage corresponded to collective analytic stage in mastering conduction of dialog. If during the second substage the attention was focused on obtaining personal, one's own knowledge and expansion of personal experience, at the second substage the attention was focused on student ability to analyze and accept plurality of knowledge of others with various approaches to understanding.

The third substage was aimed at shifting the focus from developing dialog skills to joint collective of personal individual research; the objective of this substage was formulated as formation of skills for distilling knowledge by analysis of several different sources of information. During the analysis of student activity, attention was paid to development of critical and creative components of thinking, while tolerant attitude to the problem was evaluated by a relevant search for solution on the basis of bringing several opposing views to a common denominator. The objective of the third stage was developing motivational and need-related component of tolerance in students, which is characterized by responsible search for optimal forms of interpersonal interaction. The main principles of this stage were co-transformation and humanitarization of knowledge. By content, this third substage of the research corresponded to personal-reflective stage of dialog.

Principal research methods during the main stage of the study were ascertaining experiment, educational conversation, educational observation, analysis of student works, questionnaire.

At the final stage of the study, a final diagnostic was conducted on maturity of tolerance in students, with systematization and generalization of research results. The main educational conditions were determined for efficient formation of tolerance in students during organization of instructional dialog. The following methods were used: ranking, methods of mathematical statistics, comparative analysis.

When researching the maturity level of tolerance in students, the authors conducted level, comparative and complex analysis of data during the teaching experiment. To that end, the authors additionally took into account the results obtained by questionnaires, conversations, etc.

In light of the modern principles of education, the foundation of forming student tolerance during the process of instructional dialog was formed by the following approaches: axiological, personality development, systemic activity, conversational, personal creative. All the links in organization of instructional dialog were intended to implement subject-centered vector of learning, activating formative mechanisms of tolerant consciousness and behavior in students. Axiological approach assumed creating educationally-grounded conditions during the organization of instructional dialog in order to assign and further translate universal human values on behalf of students, their evaluation, selection and translation onto interior personal level. Conversational approach assumed instructor's skill in selection and construction of subject content in the form of a dialog between students on the one side and the instructor, book, historical personality text, oneself of the other side. Personality development and systemic activity approaches in teaching humanities put additional focus on developing spiritual potential of student personality while finding a solution of a personally-meaningful training problem.

Instructional dialog was constructed from creating conditions for talking or arguing, feeling spiritual closeness or dissent with the principal subjects of communication, with authors of books and historical personalities, contemporaries of principal characters, with readers understood as teachers, students and authors, with readers and characters from the past, with other students as representatives of different generations and subcultures of the modern society.

The principle of humanitarization of knowledge assumed construction of a learning existence as "expressive and talking existence" for students. This objective assumed selection of necessary content, thus allowing provoking a comparison of one's own perception and that of other's; drawing analogies linking development of processes in different historical periods was encouraged. During the classes, subject matter was presented in problematic form, thus stimulating students to overcome preformed stereotypes, encouraging reaction, as well as translation of scientific knowledge in the domain of personal experience.

Attitude to students as equal participants of interaction facilitated strengthening of the living knowledge. Implementation of the open position principle in communication with students created prerequisites for trust-based relations by means of opening one's own mental world, demonstration of oneself as a seeking, doubtful, indignant or cheerful person.

Following the principle of systemic pluralism, learning conditions were created during the teaching experiment facilitating holistic understanding of the subject of cognition on behalf of students. The systemic approach was based upon understanding of impossibility to attain absolute knowledge and thus principal unfinalizability of dialog.

Co-transformation principle was aimed at understanding the mechanism of intersubject interaction not only as an ability to action, but as an ability to perceive actions of others. A practical embodiment of the said principle led the authors to a system of integrated interdisciplinary seminars, which covered questions from several subjects (History, Social Studies, Literature, Regional History). Building dialog with students during problem or partially exploratory lectures demonstrated their aspiration to reach interdisciplinary space, to go beyond a single discipline. In the end, student perception of importance of humanities as a whole changed. With the same purpose in mind, during the classes, the authors used a

narrative method consisting of a need to provide explanation on behalf of a historical person, basing on specific facts and behavior.

Socratic dialog without a known correct solution proved an effective didactic technique. So, students realized impossibility of a momentary, simple and definitive achievement of an optimal solution.

The results of the experimental part of the research demonstrated a significant positive dynamics in the maturity level of tolerance in experimental group students. Analysis of distribution of students by tolerance maturity levels witnessed to the positive dynamics. Fig. 01 shows dynamic changes during formation of various components of tolerance in students of control and experimental groups through the study.

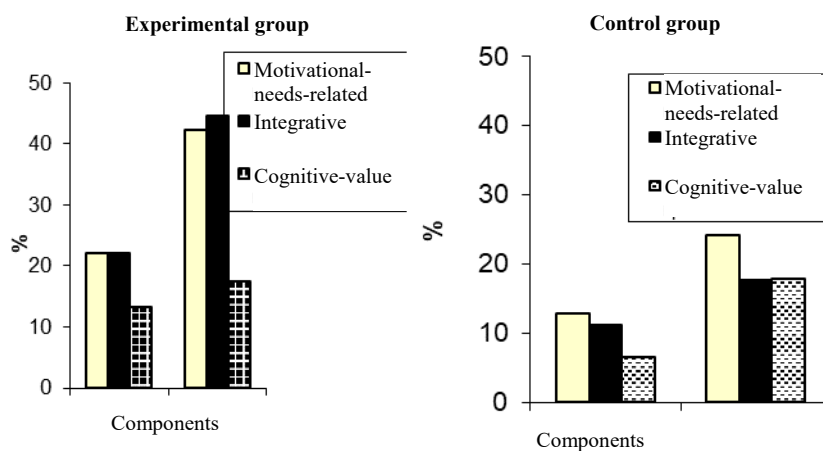


Figure 1. Formative dynamics of tolerance components in higher education students in experimental and control groups through the research

In order to calculate reliability and accuracy of statistical data obtained during the teaching experiment, Rulon formula was used; in order to calculate coefficients for reliability and consistency of the test as a whole, Spearman-Brown formula and Cronbach's Alpha were used. The following values were obtained: Rulon reliability and accuracy amounted to 0.933; reliability-consistency amounted to 0.935 and 0.927. Additionally, the following indicators were calculated: median = 10; standard deviation = 6; minimum score = 0; maximum score = 20. The results, shown in Fig. 1 vividly demonstrate a positive and stable formation of tolerance components in students of the experimental group in comparison to students of the control group.

6. Findings

1. Formation of a tolerant personality is a relevant problem of the modern educational science. The tolerant personality is understood as a prerequisite for successful development of the modern multi-ethnic society. It is necessary to understand that there is a certain relation between an initial state of tolerance structural elements and the desired final result, achieved by its functions: humanitarian, identification function and social adaptation function.

2. During the research, the authors defined the following three levels of tolerance maturity – intolerant, tolerating and tolerant. Analysis of educational literature allowed formulating criteria and

corresponding level indicators of tolerance maturity in students. The maturity criterion of the cognitive-value component of tolerance was set from evaluation of knowledge about oneself, attitude to oneself and the world around. The maturity criterion of the integrative component was set from empathic ability, changes in one's concept of self, the world and reliability. The maturity criterion of motivational-needs component was determined by presence of independent motivation and needs in dialog.

3. The authors define instructional dialog as a specifically arranged activity situation, where interpersonal interaction is based upon acceptance of value and meaning variability in understanding the world. Foundation of the instructional dialog is formed by the following dialog-oriented methods: narrativization, socratic dialog, dramatization, personification, debates. The purpose of the dialog is assumed as reaching exchange of values and meanings between the subject, comparisons, interpretation of various ideas, views, point of views, assuming reaching common ground by means of overpersuasion or yielding one's previous self in order to make terms with other's self.

4. During the research, it has been determined that increasing efficiency of educational process aimed at formation of tolerance in students by means of instructional dialog is facilitated by specifically arranged educational conditions. One of the most important educational conditions is achievement of dialog nature, understood as interaction of multiple points of view, variable forms and methods of student self-expression and self-actualization during the learning process. Establishment of the conversational dialog-based learning shall include the following stages: individual-cognitive, collective-analytical, personal-reflective; dialog potential shall be actualized on condition of following a set of principles of educational interaction: humanitarization of historical knowledge, open position, systemic pluralism, co-transformation principle.

7. Conclusion

Thus, socio-economic instability, imbalance in inter-ethnic relations, the scale and spontaneous nature of migrations, increasing anxiety in the mass consciousness (stereotypes and phobias) amplify intolerant trends. It leads to disintegration of a stable sphere of interactions, to destruction of a habitual regime of tolerance, creation of closed communities (ethnic clans), formation of specific values, lifestyle, traditions, sometimes radically different from currently accepted. In the context of isolation, decrease in the number of contacts leads to a reduction in tolerance. The authors are of an opinion that formation of tolerance in students shall start from creating specific educational conditions. Among those, conversational dialog-based means show high effectiveness.

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