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Typological characteristics of the intercultural humanitarian educational technologies

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Abstract

The core idea of this research is the creation of a complete picture of intercultural humanitarian educational technologies for the purpose of correction of pedagogical self-image and self-attitude of teachers and students in order to reach the goal of harmonization of individual and transpersonal communications in the sphere of education. During the analysis, the author discovered the transcultural humanitarian nature of the mentioned issues and summed up its essence in a number of points. The author highlighted a special quality of the humanitarian educational technologies, which is manifested in the cognitive human abilities to learn and to teach in cross-cultural circumstances. As for teachers, these human abilities are educational charisma, personal educational space, special vibrant energy and speech, developmental inspiration and aspiration, over-rational behavior and individual interactional system. For students that means the ability to consciously use their essential learning and creative powers in a daily ever-progressing nonstop developmental process. The author proved that a system of educational sources is formed by cross-cultural texts, which possess numberless shades of human existence. Such system is the key content in application of the intercultural humanitarian technologies. The subject of this study is, first, the issue of values, meanings, self-understanding, self-awareness, self-perception, self-cognition, self-development and the ways of interaction between people from a cross-cultural perspective. Based on the reflexive approach, the author developed an intercultural typology of the humanitarian educational technologies. The “subject-subject” and the “subject-object” models of educational interaction were chosen as the main characteristic and criterion for the creation of the typology. The author conducted an analysis of the “open” and “closed” models of educational interaction in order to describe their technological status based on the reflexive approach, and thus, proved the danger of forced educational rationing. In relation to the existing cross-cultural norms and conditions, the author identified the importance of the ability to get into the reflexive and dialogical positions both by teachers and students.

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1. Introduction

Humanism as a universal cross-cultural value. A humanistic attitude is based on the recognition of essential human needs, such as individual freedom, happiness and continuous creative evolution or destructive involution, which cannot be ignored as it is one of the basic human instincts. The aspiration to penetrate into the depths of the human world gradually forms the humanitarian paradigm, which has been known from the Socrates time in the West, and which developed, mainly, in the Renaissance period. An individual human being with his/her own inner multidimensional psychic space and unique cognitive process are the main values and focus in the context of cross-cultural humanitarianism. This is important for international pedagogics as science and practice, because a humane attitude to reality arises in its depths, as well as other basic processes of humanitarian education. The basic qualities of intercultural education are equality, dialogic foundation, unconditional perception, reasonable trust and open unbiased consciousness. The main purpose of such education is the development of an individual as a transcultural human being with a positive, friendly attitude to the world. With regard to higher educational institutions, the cross-cultural processes are conditioned by the creation of a free learning environment in order to discover, open up and develop the essential learning qualities of students with respect to individual inclinations and diverse multitude of the social, institutional and cultural contexts. In other words, this would mean a creation of all necessary conditions for an ongoing self-cognition through impartial and spontaneous resonance with the surrounding diverse world in all its unpredictable cross-cultural manifestations. For a teacher by vocation, the transcultural individual development would mean a spiritual process of the collective impersonal self-cognition in the ever-becoming existence adorned with individual mind-streams of various consciousnesses having various degrees of awareness. In the modern educational dimension of the impermanent ever-globalizing world, these cross-cultural phenomena require sincere involvement, understanding and creative over-rational interaction. Therefore, the humanitarian paradigm is based on interactive research technologies, which use the languages of natural human communication. A cross-cultural interactive educational space is a basis for a humanitarian interaction of various conscious and unconscious elements of students' and teachers' individual psychics. This process of educational interaction generates alternative creative visions of the world and develops the ability to resonate with others on deeper and broader levels of a multidimensional educational space, which gives rise to unbiased attitude and deep faith in universal human values.

Humanitarian educational technologies are cross-cultural by nature and they should be aimed at harmonization of one's inner and outer worlds by discovering and acquiring pure living knowledge. This knowledge should become personal and, subsequently, lead to a harmonization of relations of an individual with other living beings and forms of life. In this educational process, an individual should learn to respect other individual dimensions of living beings applying the ethics of non-violence and non-interference at any level, let alone trying to extend one's views over somebody else based on egocentric ambitions. And of course, an individual should learn, where, when and how he/she should interfere or even is obliged to, otherwise there would be harm and failure to fulfill one's moral duties, which should be known in the process of pedagogical training beforehand, of course. One should learn to find proper ways and skillful means of communication and collaboration staying positive and polite, tolerant and friendly, kind and loving in the unconditional universal sense, of course. Therefore, the author defines the humanitarian educational technologies as a logical sequence of actions reflected at the level of professional consciousness. This sequence reflects the way of achieving a specific objective, repeatable and harmonious in relation to specific conditions, situations and circumstances. The cross-cultural humanitarian nature of educational technologies is manifested in the following items:

- Its essential need is intercultural dialogue
- It uses improvisational creative ways of intercultural perception and cognition
- It can develop only in the conditions of proper ecological quality and cross-cultural flexibility of education
- Its necessary precondition is openness and anti-manipulative behavior
- Its characteristic feature is focus on the present moment
- It is conditioned by a clear visualization of perspectives to develop the tactics and strategy of their attainment

- Its necessary precondition is an optimistic educational aspiration
- It tends to develop valuable learning qualities and to evoke individual essential powers of students

Actual human abilities are widely used as “pedagogical tools”, such as a teacher’s personality, his/her vibrant energy and inspiration, speech and system of relations. The content of these “tools” is a system of sources – cross-cultural texts reflecting a deep realm of human existence.

The algorithm of work with a cross-cultural text involves dialogue. Dialogue is seen as a way of cognition and a form of communication on the emotional, rational and spiritual levels of individual experience. This experience includes generation of new forms of knowledge, culture and awareness of the diverse phenomenological world. This refers to the chain unfolding dialogical situations reflecting the dynamics of open interactions between the subjects of an educational process. These internal and external interactions should, of course, have a form of questions and answers, and be trustful and constructive.

Thus, the creation of a holistic picture of the humanitarian educational technologies is a timely and interesting task from a scientific point of view. The object of this study are values, meanings, self-understanding, self-awareness, self-perception, self-cognition, self-development and ways of interaction between people.

2. Reflexive approach as a research instrument of the humanitarian educational technologies

The procedure of building a complete picture of the humanitarian educational technologies is impossible without a methodological foundation of the reflexive approach. This approach was born in the area of reflexive psychology, which examines the role of reflexion in the system of psychological mechanisms. They provide a creative development of human consciousness and personality. Psychological research of the humanitarian and culturological orientations interprets reflexion as a subject’s reconsideration and restructuring of the contents of one’s own experience (Rastyannikov, Stepanov, & Ushakov, 2002).

The basis of such a methodological and technological approach is the person-centred concept of the Rogers’ humanistic psychology (Rogers, 1951, 1961). In the methodological sense, reflexive approach provides a substantive vision of the studied reality, categorizing and conceptualizing it by means of notions, and allowing to learn and transform it technologically through specific activities. Thereby, various goals are being achieved, and practical problems - solved. Thus, a scientific approach means a constructive unity of the knowledge about the studied reality and the activity changing it expediently (Semenov, 2004).

In this regard, it makes sense to use the term “reflexive practice”. This term belongs to Donald Schön. He suggested profound ideas about the nature of organizations, individuals and the emergence of creativity. He made a significant contribution to the development of the theory and practice of action science (Schön, 1983). According to his definition, reflexive practice is such an organization of educational processes, during which students carefully reflect on their activities, especially regarding the opportunities to apply the acquired knowledge in real situations, while being under the guidance of an experienced teacher.

The reflexive-humanistic conception of personality, which is being developed in this area of psychology, is interesting from the pedagogical point of view (Davydova, & Semenov, 1998). According to this concept, the development of individual interaction with the world, the increase of its complexity and meaning are directly dependent on the development of the reflexive ability to have a certain attitude. From this perspective, reflexion means an attitude, which is actively experienced by an individual towards something outside or inside oneself, and which is connected with the emergence of a new vision. This activity comes from a phenomenon generated by something outside and affecting an individual strongly. That means such phenomenon is perceived by an individual as something of high importance, something truly personal and relevant to oneself.

The structure of the reflexive attitude here includes both the personal meaning, which an individual has in relation to a situation, and the reality displaying itself - an object of human attention. The value of such experience is the very process of subjective personal reflexion, which helps to find the fact that a pure satisfaction of one’s aspirations is unproductive, while a certain attitude provides effective work by generating and developing the psychic mechanisms of creative comprehension and reinterpretation of the previous experience, giving free space to an unbiased perception of the new one.

An important reflexive action, which is necessary to specify for the typology of the humanitarian educational technologies, is the detection of the initial methodological position in relation to dialogue. “The topic of dialogue as a theoretical and an actual category of life does not lose its relevance, because it is dialogism that forms the subject of the post-non-classical knowledge. In this connection, here arises a serious contradiction. On the one hand, dialogue becomes a regulatory requirement to everything starting from the ways of knowing and ending with the ways of behaving in life. On the other hand, we are increasingly faced with situations where dialogue is missing, nobody is hearing each other, people can not and do not want to talk with each other” (Petrenko, 2008). Dialogue as a system of developing arguments is a process of reflexive interaction, which becomes a basis of the socio-humanitarian cognition. The process of awareness, the movement of thought towards truth develop the ability to see and understand the real situation, which is happening externally and within oneself. Therefore, interactions between teachers and students should be managed in accordance with such “dialogue universals” (Petrenko, 2008) as faith, empathy, understanding, subjectivity, coexistence, love, interactivity.

The main criterion serving as a foundation for this typology is the *type of interaction* between educational subjects from the viewpoint of the *basic leading process* unfolding in collaboration. Its content determines the specificity and integrity of the whole technological system, which is characterized by one or another interactional mode. Attitude is an important methodological category, because the complex and diverse social relations determine the specifics of the modern life from birth. In all conscious situations, a person has an essential need to manifest creativity in finding safe, proper and humane relations with other sentient beings.

The external typological process of educational technologies relies, primarily, on the initial determination of two main types of pedagogical attitudes to educational interaction. The first attitude is subject-object. The second attitude is subject-subject. The opposition of these approaches is interpreted as an opposition of the traditional and humanistic attitudes to pedagogical interaction. A traditional system considers the process of reproduction as leading, while a humanistic system upholds the developmental process. The results of an internal typological process are determined by the states of one’s inner personal harmonization, which causes a manifestation of the essential individual learning and creative powers leading to a professional knowledge.

Methodological guidelines that define the personal and professional positions of a teacher depend upon his/her value system. The system of values adopted by a teacher is manifested in ethical and psychological self-programming. The most important points of such mind-set are:

- Attitude to students: self-programming on understanding, empathy, relative autonomy of an individual, independence and autonomy of students, identification and development of creative potential for all the participants of a dialogical educational interaction
- Attitude to the organization of group activity: self-programming on development of collective creativity, reflexive management, which specificity is that it induces self-activity and independence of interactional subjects
- Attitude of a teacher to himself/herself: self-programming on interest in effective communication; focus on professional, creative and personal growth, reflexion, positive “I-concept”, which is characterized by the confidence that students like you, that you are able to achieve the goals of pedagogical interaction and help students in the formation and development of their positive “I-concept”

The core of the humanitarian educational technologies is the motivational mechanism. The effectiveness of the activation process of the motivational mechanism depends on the development levels of the organizational and interpersonal relations in a group determined by a number of social, scientific, culturological, psycho-pedagogical and other factors. A motivational mechanism is implemented through the logical procedures as follows:

- A subject’s goal-setting in accordance with internal and external motivators
- A choice and implementation of behavioural strategies
- Achieving the results of the implemented strategies
- Evaluation and comparison of results

Further differentiation by means of categories traditionally and humanistically is based on the descriptions of the types of social interaction and the management styles of pedagogical processes. Psychologists (Rastyannikov,

Stepanov, & Ushakov, 2002) developed the current understanding of the management styles by adding the co-creative style to the democratic, permissive and authoritarian ones. They expanded the description of the two main types of social interaction, such as competition and cooperation. The researchers suggested that such type of interaction as cooperation could be subdivided into three subtypes:

- Execution of leader's orders by group members
- Cooperation of group members with each other
- Co-creative interaction

The basis for distinguishing these subtypes of cooperation, in their view, is that such management systems of interaction, as authoritarian, democratic and co-creative, cause different ways of group members' interaction, which, nevertheless, in general, can be characterized as cooperative. The permissive type causes a competitive interaction of group members. Based on the above, the researchers identified several types of group behaviour in joint solution of creative tasks:

- Permissively competitive
- Authoritatively executive
- Democratic cooperation
- Developmental co-creative interaction

The researchers also identified the four areas of joint creative work as intellectual, personal, communicative and cooperative. Such description is interesting in the developmental context of the reflexive individual culture, which is characterized by the following features:

- Willingness and ability of an individual to creatively comprehend and overcome the problem-conflict situations
- Ability to gain new meanings and values
- Skills to adapt to unfamiliar systems of interpersonal relations
- Skills to set and solve extraordinary practical tasks

The main indicator and basic parameter of individual reflexive culture is the ability to work and act in conditions of uncertainty. Reflexive learning dates back to the philosophy of Socrates - the so-called *Socratic questioning*, the meaning of which is to overcome the current opinions, stereotypes and myths that people are usually content with in their everyday life. Socrates called his method metaphorically "*Maieutics*" – such an "obstetric aid" for creative extraordinary thinking (Antisery, & Reale, 2003). It is a method of knowledge elicitation through a series of questions and answers. Through constant interpersonal communication and philosophic debates with various people, Socrates, in his conversations, deliberately opened up the unexpected zones of ignorance or white spots in those parts of human minds, where, seemingly, everything was known. He made people think "from scratch", as if for the first time, independently, without any supports prepared in advance or taken as given from the storages of one's limited personal experience. That way Socrates started the mechanisms of self-reflexion activating the deeper and higher layers of consciousness. In such cases, creativity may be regarded as the fundamental principle. Creativity calls for a constant readiness to revise the outdated information and to consider the new current realities through the prism of the present moment. In the process of such reflexive reconsideration, an effective personal strategy develops due to a new level of generalized meanings.

Due to the process of reflexion, the development of human abilities becomes self-managed, which is an unlimited and unbound process of accumulating one's creative abilities and opportunities. Organization of this joint reflexive process is a complex methodological and creative task for a progressive teacher. To distinguish the reflexive type of a teacher-students' interaction from the non-reflexive one, the author of this study analysed the typology of learning interactions proposed by Ian McGrath (McGrath, 1997). Doctor McGrath identified four strategies of a teacher-audience's interaction, which make up the macro-level of an entire interactional system:

- Feeding (imperative)
- Leading (directive)
- Showing (demonstrative)
- Throwing (active)

It should be specified that the categories of “feeding” and “leading” are focused on knowledge and consider a teacher as a sole source of all knowledge. Hence, these are the “knowledge oriented” categories, while the categories of “showing” and “throwing” are focused on the “knowledge-action” aspect of educational interaction, so they can be determined as “action oriented” categories. The given typology allows concluding that not only teachers and students make the process of pedagogical interaction effective, but also the knowledge, which has its own typology as well.

A new circle of complementary relations and creative communications arises in the sphere of pedagogical interaction due to the “living knowledge”. It can be described in the following educational scheme: “teacher - student - sociocultural environment of a higher educational institution - life”. Moreover, this complementary and creative process involves a removal of the existing contradiction between a human being and nature, since life and nature are inseparable entities. In such a model, personal and professional development can occur only due to creative and effective pedagogical interactions.

Based on the above and on the method of the reflexive approach, the author built a new typology of pedagogical interactions for the sociocultural environment of a higher educational institution:

Table 1. The typology of pedagogical interactions through the category of “Attitude” (methodological status of the system of pedagogical interactions).

№	The subject-subject attitude (humanistic approach)	The subject-object attitude (traditional approach)
1	Attitude through the type of behaviour: guided & active interactions	Attitude through the type of behaviour: translational & demonstrational interactions
2	Attitude to the value system through the following mind-sets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitude to students: psychological setting of understanding, empathy, relative autonomy and independence for the subjects of pedagogical interaction; identification and development of the creative potential of all the participants of a dialogic educational interaction through the motivational mechanisms • Attitude to the organization of collective activity: psychological setting of the development of collective creativity; reflexive management, the specificity of which is that it encourages self-activity and autonomy of the managed subjects affecting the processes of self-management, and, thereby, ensuring their subjective position in educational processes • Self-attitude: psychological setting of interest in effective communication; focus on the professional, creative and personal growth; reflexion; positive “I-concept” 	Attitude to the value system through the following mind-sets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitude to students: psychological setting of demand, threat, punishment, prohibition and violation of personal autonomy; requirement of exact reproducibility of information obtained from a teacher; monological educational interaction; stimulation through the manipulative mechanisms • Attitude to the organization of collective activity: psychological setting of the organization of unhindered access of information from teachers to students or the ability to broadcast information in any environment through the authoritarian management, or the management of the permissive type • Self-attitude: psychological setting of material goods, negative “I-concept”
3	Attitude through the type of group interaction: cooperation & competition	Attitude through the type of group interaction: competition, confrontation
4	Attitude through the style of interactional management: reflexive, co-creative, democratic	Attitude through the style of interactional management: authoritative, permissive
5	Attitude through the interactional strategy: democratic cooperation and developmental co-creative interaction	Attitude through the interactional strategy: permissive, competitive, authoritative and executive
6	Attitude to the process: the basic leading process is the open process of development. The system feature is “an open one”	Attitude to the process: the basic leading process is the closed process of reproduction. The system feature is “a closed one”
7	Attitude to knowledge: focus on the “living knowledge”	Attitude to knowledge: focus on the “program knowledge”

3. Conclusion

Therefore, interactivity is a natural quality of a human being. Interactivity is a system-forming characteristic of the humanitarian educational technologies. Dialogue and polylogue are peculiar to a person. Of course, not only communication on the verbal level is significant for interaction. Expression of emotions and non-verbal behavior are also the basic human qualities. Social behavior of an individual is a response to the internal and external issues, needs, challenges and changes. However, not every wish to interact with another subject meets response. The meaning of the humanitarian educational technologies in the sphere of higher education is precisely that they work more as methodological guidelines to be followed, rather than ready-made recipes. The development of effective teaching methods and behavioral patterns, taking into account the tendencies in the self-development of students, is always an innovative activity, since it requires from teachers a constant generation of ingenious creative solutions. The conclusion is that there is a need in the development and implementation of the humanitarian technologies as a fundamentally new type of educational process, which fully complies with such requirements of the new humanitarian paradigm, as flexibility, innovation, multivariance of solutions, interactivity, creative approach, etc. Thus, it is an issue about a justification of the educational systems associated not only with the introduction of an individual to the universal experience and knowledge, but, mainly, with the subjectivation of these experience and knowledge in unique singular forms of personal identity.

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