

The Civic Self-Determination of Senior Secondary School Students in Latvia in the Context of Humanitarian Model of Education¹

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Abstract

Research methods:

- 1. The methods used at the theoretical stage include: theoretical analysis, the essence of civic self-determination, the generalization of pedagogical experience, scientific observation.*
- 2. The methods used at the experimental pilot phase include modelling, pedagogical experiment, questionnaire, interview, mathematical statistics.*
- 3. The methods used at the summary stage: - comparison, synthesis, interpretation.*

Results:

- 1. Theoretical significance - civic self-determination is treated by using a value-based approach; there has been determined the structure of civic self-determination.*
- 2. Practical significance is represented by the organization of humanitarian education for the development of the civic self-determination of senior secondary school students.*

Key Words

civic self-determination, humanitarian model of education, citizenship, civic responsibility.

¹ *If this paper is quoted or referenced, we ask that it be acknowledged as:*

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1. The humanitarian model as the basis for the development of civic self-determination

The new historical circumstances of the 21st century (i.e., changes in the model of globalization and economic models) have resulted in the changes in the methodology of pedagogy. The aim of education has changed. It is not only the development of knowledge and skills but also the formation of individual's culture, the development of unique individuality.

As a result, the model of education is changing because the existing cognitive model of education is becoming ineffective. This model focuses on the development of knowledge and skills rather than on the development of the whole personality. When marks are the main criterion of a learner's success, a de-humanization of education can be observed.

Therefore, a humanitarian model has been developed, the content of which is culture as a system of values. The humanitarian model of education worked out by M. Chehlov in Latvia facilitates the creation of the humanistic environment in an educational institution (Chehlov, 2011). The key criterion for learners' success is their perfect self-realization in various forms of activity. This model has been implemented in the educational process in Pushkin Lyceum on Riga, Latvia.

Humanitarian culture is the content basis for the humanitarian model of education. Knowledge acquires humanitarian nature if it is personally meaningful for a student. Personal meaning is regarded as a value in humanitarian culture.

Pushkin Lyceum is a school where students can choose their area of specialization at the level of secondary education. This is a democratic model of education as senior secondary school students freely choose their area of specialization. Besides, it is a humanistic model of education since the teacher and learners are equal partners in their common activity. Thus, specialized education in school creates broad space for the self-determination of senior secondary school students as it involves the interconnection of various forms of creative activity.

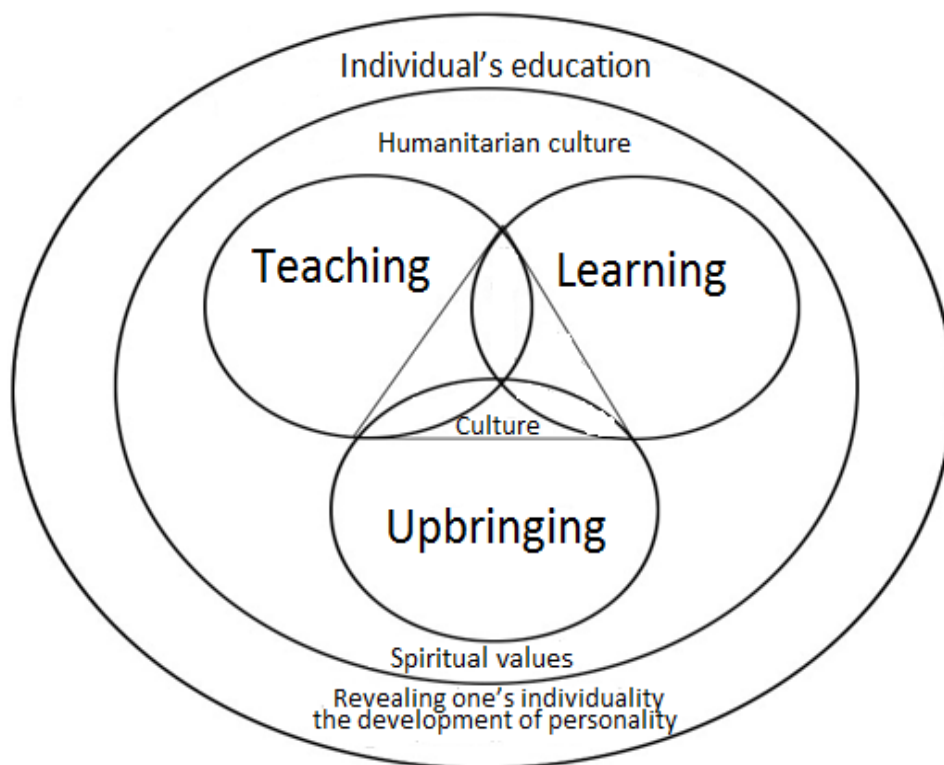


Figure 1. The humanitarian model of education.

2. The essence and structure of civic self-determination

The notion of civic self-determination involves three integrative components:

- civic responsibility,
- tolerance,
- European identity (Chehlova, 2006)

Each of these components is an integrative formation as well, based on social values. Civic responsibility is based on the attitude towards the state as a value. Tolerance refers to the attitude towards other as a value. European identity is based on the attitude to the diversity of cultures in Latvia and in the world as a value.

2.1. The psychological - pedagogical aspect of civic self-determination.

Most of the contemporary psychologists include the following components in the structure of civic self-determination:

- the cognitive component (i.e., knowledge, notions about the state and the awareness of oneself as its citizen);
- the axiological component (i.e., the system of views and values);
- the behavioural component (i.e., the realization of oneself as a citizen in the society, in cross-national communication) (Ginzburg, 1994).

Each of these components has its characteristic features; at the same time, they all are interconnected and interrelated in actual functioning. This integration of the components of civic self-awareness enables young people to adapt to the changing conditions of their life activity.

3. Development of civic self-determination of students on the basis of the humanitarian model of education.

3.1. The aim and the programme of the experiment

Within the framework of the present study, an establishing experiment was carried out. The aim of the experiment was to study the development of civic self-determination of senior secondary school students: to study civic responsibility, tolerance and European identity. The following methods were used in the experiment:

- a survey
- discussion
- testing
- mathematical statistics

3.2. Studying the characteristics of civic self-determination

3.2.1. Civic responsibility

The analysis of the results of the survey questions concerning the future plans of the senior secondary school students showed that most of the respondents (55%) intend to live and work abroad after finishing their secondary education, whereas 45% intend to work in Latvia. This is due to the fact that in Latvia the economic situation is not so prosperous as in wealthier countries of the European Union. Besides, there are not enough state-funded places in the institutions of higher education, and a lot of students have to pay for their studies, and study grants are regarded as low as well. All in all, the analysis of the results of the survey demonstrates

insufficient development of civic responsibility among senior secondary school students.

3.2.2. Tolerance and readiness for cross-national communication

Our interest in the development of tolerance (UNESCO, 1995) was due to the transformations having taken place in Europe: the creation of common educational space and the single European labour market. The development of tolerance among senior secondary school students is based on the attitude to other as a value.

According to our respondents, 90% of the representatives of different nationalities have excellent or good relations in the process of mutual collaboration. On the other hand, 10% communicate only with the representatives of their own nationality due to the insufficient knowledge of another language (Russian/ Latvian). All in all, the analysis of the survey results showed that 60% of senior secondary students demonstrate ethical and humanistic orientation in their relations with other people.

3.2.3. The European identity

We believe that the basis of the European identity is the attitude to the diversity of cultures in Latvia and the European Union as a value. In the present study, the method of testing and the test 'Your life priorities' (Golovaha, 1988) was used.

The analysis of the results showed that senior secondary school students have a high level of interest in the diversity of cultures of the European Union. This is due to the fact that in the lyceum they study various languages, i.e., Latvian, Russian, English, French, German, Spanish, and Latin. They have acquired the styles of social behaviour and understand that the cross-cultural dialogue is natural and essential for cross-cultural interaction.

Conclusions

The theoretical significance of the study - the essence and the structure of civic self-determination has been determined, and the humanitarian model of education with humanitarian culture as the aggregate of values as its content has been elaborated upon.

The Practical significance of the study – the process of learning has been organized on the basis of the humanitarian model of education to promote the development of the civic self-determination of senior secondary school students.

The development of tolerance and European identity as the components of citizenship is at the optimum or high level in the senior secondary students constituting the sample of the present study. The development of civic responsibility, on the other hand, needs improvement.

The results of the experiment showed that the humanitarian model of education is effective for the development of civic self-determination of senior secondary school students.

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