

# Museum Pedagogics as a Means of Formation of Ethnocultural Competency of Future Educators

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The subject of our research is of great relevance due to the fact that in the current context, when educational environment is marked by its multicultural and multiethnic features, the issue of formation of ethno cultural competency is very important. Thus the goal of this article is to discover the potential of museum pedagogics and its role in the formation of ethno cultural competency of future educators. The principal methods of the research are theoretical and practical ones, which allow to have a comprehensive look at the formation of ethno cultural competency of future educators. The article introduces the viewpoints of scholars and experts regarding such concepts as "multicultural educational environment", "museum pedagogics", "ethno cultural competency"; it detects common approaches, as well as differing ones, to the potential of museum pedagogics and its role in the formation of ethno cultural competency of future educators. The results of the research - which help to identify the level of ethno cultural competency among the students of the department of psychology and pedagogics - will help to make corrections in our efforts to use the potential of the museums of Yoshkar-Ola and Mari State University in the process of training of future educators.

KEYWORDS

Ethno cultural competency, future educator, museum pedagogics, multicultural educational environment

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# Introduction

Russia has always been a multinational state – both historically and at present. This issue has continually impacted the social, economical, political and cultural life of the entire society.

The nowadays Russia is marked by dynamic migration processes, which are caused, first of all, by relocation due to job search, and secondly, due to the choice of educational establishment. Thus relocation causes the occurrence of ethnically mixed families; multinational groups of people appear both in schools and colleges; intercultural and interethnical communication sets on a broader scale. These tendencies make the issue of training future educators even more vital; we need teachers who will be able to work in a multicultural educational environment. This requires of students to be ethno culturally competent.

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In order to develop ethno cultural competency of future educators we need efficient means. The theoretical study of this issue and the practical organization of educational activity in higher educational establishments allow to identify museum pedagogics as one of such means.

Thus the abovementioned helps to specify the object of our research: methods and forms of organization of educational activity for developing ethno cultural competency of future educators in the process of their professional training.

#### Literature Review

The problem of training local educators to teach in a polyethnic educational environment has a long historical background. The domestic concepts of national education and country-specific school defined the objectives of school as an instrument of education, as well as the instrument of linguistic and spiritual integration of the peoples.

The phenomenon of polyethnicity has been the subject of research in the world pedagogics since 1960-s, and beginning in 1980-s the establishment of the concepts of polyethnical, bicultural and cross-cultural education is being actively developed internationally. The concept of intercultural dialogue is one of the theories of the national science which serves as a basis for the analysis of modern tendencies in the development of pedagogics of higher educational institutions - tendencies, which help cultivate the means, conditions and mechanisms of formation of ethno cultural competency of a future teacher, as well as prepare him/her for the professional activity in a polyethnic educational environment. According to this phylosophic concept, various cultures are in the state of uninterrupted dialogue with each other, interacting and complementing each other on a continuous basis. This concept also concerns the notion of ethnic culture as a combination of traditional values, relations and behavioral peculiarities - reflected in the physical and spiritual activity of the ethnic group - which were established in the past, have been developing in the historical social dynamics and are continuously ethnically enriching the culture in various aspects of people's activity.

In the end of the twentieth century Russian academic community started actively discussing the issue of humanization and ethnization of education, defining the characteristics of a new social and cultural type of individual, who should evolve in a polyethnic educational space which combines the traits of both common and national culture. Some researchers consider ethno cultural education as a cultural phenomenon, a certain mechanism to transfer social experience, a model of education in the 21st century. Others introduce ethno cultural education as a holistic process of learning and practical application of the values of folk culture, which penetrates the culture of an ethnic group and is a part of the world culture, as well as a process of formation, socialization and personal development of an individual on the basis of ethno cultural traditions. As one of the results, ethno cultural education should lead to ethno cultural competency of an individual.

When we talk about the formation of specialists for regional educational establishments, in Russian scientific circles we encounter such term as "multicultural (polyethnic) educational environment".

- E.A. Pugacheva (2008) defines multicultural educational environment as "a spiritually saturated atmosphere of interpersonal contacts, which determines the mindset and behavior of the parties involved, as well as stimulates their need for sharing in the national and common spiritual values.
- O.V. Gukalenko (2003) sees multicultural educational environment as a means of cultivating global consciousness among the younger generations through exploration of ethnic, national and world culture. All of this must teach and prepare them to live in multicultural polyethnic environment.

In her own research, T.V. Poshtareva (2009) puts emphasis on the fact that polyethnic educational environment prepares students for an effective interethnic interaction, which preserves their ethnic identity and aims to understand other cultures.

In order to effectively work in multicultural educational environment an educator must be ethnoculturally competent.

So what does the term "ethno cultural competency" include? In the studies of foreign and domestic educationalists and psychologists on the issue of formation of ethno cultural (intercultural) competency the latter is regarded as an integrated characteristic of an individual, which implies a combination of ideas and knowledge about both native and foreign ethnocultures, about their place in the world culture, the acquisition of ethno cultural values, and is manifested in the abilities, skills and behavioral patterns in monoethnic and polyethnic environment. Modern scientists consider ethno cultural competency as a quality of an individual expressed in the combination of objective knowledge and understanding of a given culture and implemented through the abilities, skills and behavioral patterns, which promote efficient interethnic understanding and interaction.

For example, L.I. Borovikov (1983) states that ethno cultural competency allows an educator to make his/her professional activity more ethnosensitive, i.e., to be more sensitive to ethno cultural values, demands, peculiarities of national behavior and temper established in the community, as well as to the standards of ethno cultural relationships.

- S.N. Fedorova (2008, 2004) defines ethno cultural competency of an educator as a systematic, integrated education of an individual, which unites various static and dynamic characteristics and reflects the educator's activity as that of a subject of ethnoculturally focused educational process.
- S.B. Seryakova (2002) defines ethno cultural competency of an educator as a psychological and pedagogical phenomenon, which characterizes the degree of his/her assimilation of traditional ethnic culture, his/her academic and practical preparedness to communicate his/her values and to imply the basic principles of ethnipedagogics as a system of upbringing within the framework of pedagogical activity of an educational establishment, taking into account national and psychological peculiarities of the representatives of various nationalities.

Thus, scientists define ethno cultural competency of educators as an integrative professional and personal quality, which is manifested in humanistic worldview (that is, their approach to ethnic problems in the home country and in the world; the approach to ethno cultural education), in integrated proficiency (to analyse, through methodological reflection, the real-life situations that occur in ethno cultural environment; to project ethno cultural approaches to educative

process — the approaches aimed to develop tolerance and peacefulness among the students), in being ready to implement humanistic values (to create conditions for effective cross-national communication between the students; to organize events which promote interest to the historical and cultural heritage of other nations). Ethno cultural competency includes the following functionally related components: motivational and axiological, intellectual and cognitive, operative and practical, and reflexive and evaluative component.

For effective formation of ethno cultural competency we must consider the significance of external and internal patterns of the process of professional training of a future teacher. The study of internal patterns and psychological mechanisms of formation of ethno cultural competency is based on philosophical, psychological and pedagogical theories, modern theories and concepts of socialization, upbringing and development, ideas of personality development in the course of activity, the problems of interpersonal interaction and communication, aspects of age-related and pedagogical psychology of personality development in the process of their training in the higher educational establishment, the specifics of student education.

External patterns consider, primarily, the study of the specifics of the regional system of education which are related to the professional training of educators in the conditions of a multinational community. In our opinion, it is important to consider the positive experience accumulated in the polyethnic educational environment of our republic, starting from the activity of the Mari enlighteners in the second half of the 19th – beginning of the 20th century. Constitutive and genetic approach to the study of the origins of formation of Mari educators allows us both to identify the specific features of the process of development of the regional system of education, and to analyze the multiple factors which influence this process, as well as to visualize the implementation of axiological, culturological, and anthropological approach in the process of formation of educational personnel within the conditions of an ethnic region, and to determine the requirements for the ethno cultural competency of educators with consideration of the specifics of polyethnic educational environment.

Many contemporary researchers emphasize the implementation of the resources of museum pedagogics in the process of formation of ethno cultural competency of future educators.

Museum pedagogics is one of the most prominent fields of modern pedagogics, a new branch of scientific knowledge at the confluence of museology, pedagogics, psychology, art (as a part of common culture) and regional studies. Museum pedagogics explores the means of museum communication and the implementation of museum resources in the process of conveying and perceiving information in the context of pedagogics (Ivashkina, 2007).

Museum pedagogics is the pedagogics of open environment. It is not limited to the walls of a museum and is most efficient within the cooperation of school and museum, of leisure facilities and educational establishments; it works best within a rationally organized (from pedagogical point of view) cultural environment (Gamburg, 2009).

Many national and international scientists made a significant contribution in the development of museum pedagogics.

Litvarkh A. was the first one to summarize the educational purpose of museums, and suggested a new approach to a museum visitor as a dialogue participant. By practicing the method of "museum dialogue", he was the first one to validate the role of an intermediary who helps a visitor to explore art and develop the ability to see and take pleasure in the work of art (eventually this intermediary was called a "museum educator") (Vasyutkin, 2001).

The first "museum boom" took place in the 19th century, when various pedagogical schools were at their height; museology started flourishing. Museums become the center of promotion of culturological and natural science values; they also become the centers of education and research. By the middle of the 19th century the development of historical studies and urban culture prompts the society to realize that museums, in particular, have become the most appropriate form of preserving and conveying civic and national heritage and experience. This establishes defined museum policies of communication of knowledge.

Our national scientists and public figures of Saint-Petersburg made their fist attempts in establishing museum pedagogics in Russia (1864). This set the stage for Russian pedagogical museum (1865), which served as a public, scientific and educational center, and helped raise the compelling issues of pedagogical science.

In the result of theoretical analysis and practical educational activity in the museums in 1934, the term "museum pedagogics" was introduced, which implied "the traditions of artistic education by means of museum resources – traditions drawn from educational work and museum didactics" (Akhunov, 2008).

In the 40s-80s of the 20th century the development of museum pedagogics was promoted by UNESCO's idea to largely attract children and youth to visit museums. The new understanding of the role of museums in the process of education and upbringing was academically conceptualized by prominent museologists, pedagogues and psychologists as a way to involve schoolchildren in intercultural dialogue (Belyakova, 2006).

The concept of "museum pedagogics" was introduced and actively applied in our country in the beginning of 1970s. The need to identify museum pedagogics as an independent academic discipline was determined by the demand for theoretic conceptualization and upgrading of the educative activity of museums.

The national theory of museum pedagogics was quite substantially covered in the works of the founding fathers of Russian school of excursion and of those, who supported the idea of using museums for educating their visitors, as well as in the system of aesthetic education by A.V. Bakushinskiy (1981). Considering educational activity of an art museum as a pedagogical process, A.V. Bakushinskiy emphasized the significant role of educators (Bakushinskiy, 1992).

During the formation of museum pedagogics as a science discipline greater prominence received those scientific views which were concentrated on the ideas of humanization and humanitarization of education through its reference to the world culture, history and spiritual values (Vasyutkin, 2001).

The development of museum pedagogics in Russia was also prompted by redefining the term "communication" into "museum communication", the latter serving as a dialogue interaction of individuals within the substantive environment of a museum. Besides, there were identified exposition and excursion – the first being the essential form of museum communication, the latter being the main form of educational activity of a museum. The authors of an exposition were supposed to express the natural, cultural, social and other phenomena, as well as use artistic means to create a museum image that would have an ultimate impact on a visitor's emotions and senses.

At the current stage of the theory of museum pedagogics the subject of scientific study includes cultural and educative aspects of museum communication. In his study of the problems of museum communication the "museum language" is suggested as one of the essential terms of the means of communication. B.A. Stolyarov (2002) defines this term as a "system-based organized and well-defined interaction between a museum educator and students, which promotes a unified development, upbringing and education within the museum environment, based on the consistency and similarity of all its structural elements (museum object, museum educator, museum audience)".

According to E.G. Vanslova (2003), museum pedagogics is one of the most significant fields of modern pedagogics. It is a new branch of scientific knowledge at the confluence of museology, pedagogics, psychology, art (as a part of common culture) and regional studies. It explores the means of museum communication, and the implementation of museum resources in the process of conveying and perceiving information in the context of pedagogics.

In his work "Museum as an open pedagogical system", N.V. Nagorskiy (2005) calls museum pedagogics as "pedagogics of open environment". It is not limited to the walls of a museum and is most efficient within the cooperation of school and museum, of leisure facilities and educational establishments; it works best within a rationally organized (from pedagogical point of view) cultural environment. Museum pedagogics conforms to universal patterns and applies them within the conditions of a museum. An individual chooses a desired museum of interest, determines the scope and content of information he wants to get, and independently chooses the forms and time for communication with museum assets. The goal of museum pedagogics is to successfully and to the maximum satisfy and, where possible, to expand and enrich the interests of the audience. The focus on internal and personal eventivity of a pedagogical process in a museum requires new updated methods of educational museum activity in the context of such academic and scientific concepts as «culture and explosion» (Lotman, 1998), «incoming consciousness» (Bakhtin, 2002).

Through the years various scientists and researchers have been discussing the need of using the potential of museum pedagogics in the process of training and upbringing of schoolchildren. Among them L.V. Panteleyeva (2000), S.I. Sotnikov (2004), T.P. Mysheva (2007), O.S. Sapanzha (2007), E.P. Komarovskaya (2009).

In view of the above said, we can define the following objectives of museum pedagogics:

- to promote interest for the world cultures by the means of museum and its collections:
- to cultivate considerate and respectful attitude to museum valuables, which represent history and culture of a given nation;
  - to promote the understanding of at-oneness of culture and nature;
  - to cultivate the skill of museum ethics;

— to cultivate love for the native land and the people who made a significant investment in its prosperity.

Contemporary museum pedagogics is evolving within the framework of the problems of museum communication and is aimed primarily at the objectives of education and upbringing of the younger generation. That is why the subject matter of cultural and educational activity is manifested in the forms of work with the museum audience and interaction with the educational system. There are more than a hundred of various forms, the most popular of which are lecture, excursions, tutorials, scientific readings, interest groups, workshops, recreation centers, literary soirees, movie shows, concerts, social gatherings with interesting people, festivals, historic games, contests, trivias, etc.

With this said, we see that museum pedagogics is one of the fields of pedagogical science and can be identified as a cross-disciplinary area of scientific knowledge, formed at the crossroads of pedagogics, psychology, museology and a specialized museum discipline, and a specific practical activity based on this knowledge and aimed to transfer the cultural experience to the younger generation in the context of museum environment, thus being an efficient means of formation of ethno cultural competency of future educators.

# Data, Analysis and Results

In order to determine the initial level of ethno cultural competency of future teachers, we conducted a research among the students of the Institute of Pedagogics and Psychology of Mari State University. The experiment involved 182 students.

At the ascertaining stage we have determined how often do the students visit the museums of the city, how do museum resources effect their interest to the native land or to the region of their current location for education, and how does museum pedagogics influence the formation of ethno cultural competency of the future teachers. To the question "Do you visit museums?" 25% out of 100% of the surveyed answered "Yes", 15% seldom go there, and 60 % have never visited a museum. Answering the question "What museums have you visited in Yoshkar-Ola?" 40% of the surveyed indicated that they visited the Museum of the City of Yoshkar-Ola, 30% visited the National Museum n.a. T.Evseev, 15% visited the Museum of Folk Applied Arts, 12% visited the memorial house of I.S. Kluchnikov-Palantay, 3% visited other museums. In the course of the survey some students even questioned the location of a given museum.

To the question "In your opinion, why do we need to visit museums?" the students' answer was the following: 15% of the surveyed said they go to a museum to spend leisure time, 20% go there because their curators compel them to, 35% of the students visit museums to learn about the history of the republic, 30% - to learn about the customs and traditions of the peoples of our region. To the question "Do you feel pride for the history of our region?" 55% of the surveyed gave a positive answer. In their answer to the question "Did you feel like reading about the history of the Mari region after visiting the museum?" 45% said "Yes", and the rest 55% - "No".

The results of the survey show that students, for the most part, very seldom visit the museums of Yoshkar-Ola. This, in turn, speaks about insufficient efforts to use the pedagogical potential of the museums of the city and of Mari State University in the process of formation of ethno cultural competency of

students, i.e. future educators. Ethno cultural competency, notably, enables a teacher to make his/her professional activity ethno sensitive, i.e. to be more aware of ethno cultural values, demands and peculiarities of the national mindset of the guests, the standards of ethno cultural relations customary of their community.

Addressing the issues of formation of ethno cultural competency of future educators we are concerned that modern students don't use the full scope of pedagogical potential of the museums of Yoshkar-Ola and even of Mari State University. Some of the surveyed were not even aware of the location of museums, let alone attendance. The reason for this state of things lies in the absence of academic and methodological basis, as well as of activity models of formation of ethno cultural competency of future educators by the means of museum pedagogics. The scholarship of the Russian Foundation for Humanities "The Formation of Ethno cultural Competency of Future Educators by the Means of Museum Pedagogics" no. 16-16-12006 will allow to resolve theoretical and practical issues of formation of ethno cultural competency of future educators.

#### **Discussion and Conclusion**

According to A.N. Nekrasova (1992) "ethno cultural competency of an educator" can be defined as "psychological and pedagogical phenomenon which characterizes the level of the teacher's knowledge of the nation's traditional culture and his/her academic and practical preparedness to convey his/her values, as well as to implement the basic concepts of ethno pedagogics, the latter determined as a system of upbringing within the conditions of pedagogical activity of an educational establishment, with consideration of the variety of national and psychological peculiarities of the representatives of various nationalities". Thus, agreeing with A.N. Nekrasova (1992), teachers need to focus on the formation of cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects of ethno cultural competency of future educators. The criteria of a formed ethno cultural competency of future educators can be: the knowledge of culture and history of a small motherland; the knowledge of ethno psychological specifics of the students; ethno pedagogical training; the knowledge of learning technologies intended to form ethno cultural knowledge and skills of the students, etc.

Due to the relevance of the issue of our research and the lack of theoretical and practical curriculum in the context of the new generation, there is a need for a more activated approach to the implementation of the potential of museum pedagogics in the process of formation of ethno cultural competency of future educators. To enhance cognitive, emotional and behavioral perception we can recommend using the resources of the museums of our small motherland and our university. The capital of the Republic Mari El, the city of Yoshkar-Ola, hosts the following museums which perform educational and upbringing functions: the National museum of the Republic Mari El n.a. T. Evseev represents the exposition of the wildlife of our region, historical and ethnographic materials, material and intellectual culture of the Mari people; the Museum of history of the city of Yoshkar-Ola contains the collections of ethnography, arts and crafts, archeological and heraldic showpieces, art works, photographic documents related to the history of the city; the Museum of national applied arts, which is located in an antique house, the latter in itself being a cultural heritage site, represents the sample copies of the applied arts of the Mari people; the Republican museum of fine art with showpieces of the Mari fine and applied art, paintings and drawings of the Russian artists, and sculptures; the National art gallery that, besides the permanent exposition of the paintings of the Mari artists, regularly holds the expositions of the collections of the Russian and world museums, as well as of various private collections; the Memorial house of I.S. Klyuchnikov-Palantay – the Mari composer who laid the foundation for the Mari art music – presents the exposition of the objects of household of a provincial town of the beginning of the 20th century: the interior of the old house, the parlor and the dining-room, children's room and the composer's library.

A great interest for the students may have the National memorial museum of the history of the Gulag, which represents the showpieces related to the activity of the Chief Directorate of Camps (the Gulag) in the Mari ASSR, the recreated camp interiors and atmosphere, a detailed record of the victims and their executors; the Museum of history of the USSR, which contains the everyday household items, photographs, coins, books, the symbolics of the Little Octobrists, Pioneers and Komsomol members, and many other assets of the epoch of the USSR. This museum is located in a historically significant building, which was constructed in 1927 and hosted the "House of kolkhoznik" in Soviet times.

The History Museum of Mari State University represents the history of establishment and development of higher pedagogical education in the republic. The showpieces, biographical data, photos can tell the new generation of teachers a lot of interesting and useful things about the most prominent representatives of educational activity in the Mari republic. Zoological Museum of Mari State University is the pride of the Institute of Medicine and Natural Sciences. It presents more than 1000 of showpieces, including about 680 kinds of invertebrates and vertebrates. Among them also about 146 kinds of mammals, 387 kinds of birds, 120 kinds of fish, 64 kinds of reptiles and 15 kinds of amphibians. The labels, explanatory texts, pictures and charts on the showcases and stands contain didactic information.

The abovementioned museums store among their assets very valuable materials which can be used in the process of training of future educators. Only the knowledge of history and culture of their small motherland can help bring up highly moral, real educators who are well aware of the heritage of their region and the country in general.

# Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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