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Literary Education as a Place for Multicultural Dialogue

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Abstract

Paper deals with implementation of multicultural education topics to the literary education based on the common socializing and formative functions of both disciplines within the educational framework. Paper's core is formed by presentation of research that was focused on monitoring of present state and current possibilities of multicultural education realized through the work with artistic text during the literary education classes held at the upper stage of elementary schools, namely from the teachers' perspective. To reach the most accurate findings we chose quantitative method of questionnaire survey. During the research survey we tested five hypotheses that were vital for description of factors truly influencing form of the multicultural education (form of supportive curriculum, teacher's age, taught subjects, teacher's relationship to the subject etc.). Present form of multicultural dialogue during the work with artistic text was mapped through survey items.

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1. Introduction

Efforts leading to preparation of the future generations for life within the culturally heterogeneous society are reflected in the modern world educational strategies. Multicultural education has been integrated within the environment of Czech elementary school and its curriculum documents – Framework Education Programme for Elementary Education – in form of sectional theme for several years (Balada, 2009). Multicultural education presents one of the basic educational factors in the area of development of students' intercultural capability.

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Appropriate area for functional and effective implementation of multicultural education topics is represented for example by connection of its contents with activities running during the literary educational process.

Literary education is traditionally connected to informative, formative and esthetical function, but there is however a certain transformation undergoing at present. Subject's profile is being adjusted to the changing society and its needs. It is thus possible to observe emphasizing of esthetical and educational functions of literary education or its connection to other subjects of formative character, for example to ethic education, personal education and social or multicultural education. Socialisation, literary socialization (Dawidowski, 2006) and formativeness is perceived as fundamentals of multicultural education realized at literary education classes. According to Wrobel, creation of individual cultural identity, intercultural connection with literary text, different cultural artefacts or different ways of text perception within the frame of group take place during the literary educational process (Wrobel, 2006). Author thus draws attention to socializing factors of work within the intercultural literary education, both in the double dimensional relation of student / literary text, and in relation to multidimensional relation, it means student / literary text / social group, which takes part in the development of intercultural conception of the student.

Factor that significantly determines overall form and efficiency of multicultural literary education is presented by a person of a teacher. Current curriculum policy requires teachers who are capable of adequate reactions to the changing social environment and to the consequent changes within the curriculum frameworks. Practical effect lies not only in the need of active approach leading to knowledge extension and development of pedagogical-psychological and didactical skills, but at the same time in orientation within the cultural, socio-economic, political and historical events that are being involved to the contemporary educational practice also in form of sectional themes. According to Moree (2008), key role within multicultural education is presented by a person of the teacher, his/her cultural identity, approaches, intercultural sensitivity and also his/her own experience with cultural diversity. However, basic premises of successful realization of multicultural education are expressed by teacher's motivation itself.

Multicultural literary education is boundary discipline which is quite new and it is seeking its conceptual framework. We proceeded from this fact during the realization of complex research survey that views the multicultural literary education from the position of persons involved – pedagogues teaching on the second grade of elementary schools.

2. Research objectives

General objective of the research survey is to map the current state and present possibilities of multicultural education realized through work with artistic text within the literary education classes held at the second grade of elementary schools, namely from the teachers' perspective. Our research is divided into two areas – research and exploratory. When mapping the character of multicultural literary education from the teachers' perspective we form the research objectives (relational) which represents relation between two or more variables, and exploratory objectives (descriptive) which does not involve this relation and they present descriptive character.

2.1 Research hypotheses

Research hypotheses are focused on determination of relation between usage of the latest reader book series and application of multicultural themes to the education, between inclusion of multicultural literary education to school educational programme and orientation of teachers within the given problems and further between realization of multicultural education and teachers' age, taught approbation and attitude to literary education. On the basis of the research objectives we defined following research hypotheses:

- H1: Teachers using reader books published after implementation of Framework Education Programme for Elementary Education apply multicultural themes into the literary education more often than teachers using reader book series published before implementation of Framework Education Programme for Elementary Education.

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