

FOSTERING STUDENT DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PROJECT-BASED ACTIVITIES

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Abstract

The article examines the issues of creating and implementing an ethnocultural cluster as an effective organizational-pedagogical environment for shaping the personality of primary school students. Based on theoretical analysis and empirical observations, the significance of inculturation – the process by which an individual internalizes the norms of social life and cultural practices in primary education – is substantiated. The functional characteristics of the cluster are described, both as an educational technology and as an organizational system. This includes the integration of educational institutions at various levels, the interaction between higher education institutions, research centers, enterprises, and the national community, as well as the utilization of socio-historical and cultural resources. The article analyzes the experiences of foreign countries and Uzbekistan in forming educational clusters, identifying their typological features and advantages in enhancing the quality of the educational and upbringing process. It is shown that designing an ethnocultural cluster facilitates targeted inculturation, promotes the assimilation of core national and universal human values, and contributes to the development of the spiritual and moral perspectives and social competence of primary school students. Conclusions are drawn regarding the practical significance of the cluster approach in improving the content and methods of primary education.

Keywords

ethnocultural cluster; inculturation; primary education; cultural upbringing; educational technology; intersectoral interaction; national values; pedagogical system.

Introduction: In the context of modern schools, the task of continuously improving the cultural education of students is of particular importance. To

correctly understand the mechanisms of a cultural personality's formation, it is necessary to know the principles and specific characteristics of its psychological development. The primary school age creates ample opportunities for forming moral qualities: a high degree of trust, impressionability, a tendency to imitate, and most importantly, the teacher's high authority serves to facilitate effective spiritual and moral education. Primary school plays a decisive role in the process of socialization and the formation of moral behavior. Therefore, the result of its activity should not only be a set of knowledge and skills, but also the purposeful integration of the individual into a positive culture, supported by meaningful, culturally-oriented educational materials.

Culture is closely linked with education: the transformation of information into knowledge is a creative act of cultural significance. Under these conditions, the need to place culture and its related issues at the center of human life is becoming increasingly recognized. The orientation of the educational process toward cultivating a spiritually and morally developed individual capable of active self-realization in a dynamically changing society demonstrates the practical significance of researching the formation of a cultured individual within the school.

Methods: Within the framework of the ongoing project, the issues of creating an educational ethnocultural cluster as an effective environment for forming the personality of a primary school student were studied. It is generally recognized that inculturation is the process of an individual assimilating the norms of social life and cultural practices, and the formation of a person's general cultural competence in accordance with the standards of the society in which they operate. This process primarily includes: assimilating the system of value orientations and social priorities accepted in society; mastering the rules of moral conduct in various life situations; becoming familiar with the foundations of the socio-political structure; acquiring basic knowledge about national and class traditions, and prevailing moral and ethical principles; forming a worldview and an understanding of customs and traditions; developing everyday knowledge in the social sciences and humanities; and becoming familiar with the political and cultural history of the people and the main symbols of their national dignity and pride.

In the "Ethnocultural Cluster for Primary School Students" project, the concept of "cluster" is regarded as an educational and pedagogical technology aimed at increasing the effectiveness and quality of the educational process. Such a cluster is viewed as an integrated platform that ensures the systematic organization of the content, methodological, and communicative components of teaching and

upbringing, which aids in the targeted inculturation and comprehensive development of primary school students.

An analysis of foreign experience has shown that educational clusters are widespread in a number of countries, such as the USA and France. For example, M. Porter, researching the Massachusetts educational cluster, thoroughly examines its functions within the American education system and compares them with the experience of other states and foreign countries. The national experience of France is of particular interest, as the creation of educational clusters here pursues strategic goals such as strengthening the position of higher education institutions in the educational services market and attracting foreign students.

The clusters under consideration are characterized by a number of common features: the geographical concentration of participants, the inclusion of all levels of educational organizations, and a thematic focus. These features ensure the integration of resources, coordination of educational programs, and targeted specialization. This, in turn, increases their competitiveness and effectiveness in training personnel and resolving issues of international academic partnership.

In our research, understanding the cluster as an organizational-systemic unit is of primary importance, alongside the analysis of educational technology. According to Uzbekistani researchers, an educational cluster is a unified collection of interconnected vocational education institutions, brought together by sectoral affiliation and partnership ties with industry enterprises. An educational-innovative cluster is understood as an association of industry entities – namely, higher education institutions, scientific-research centers, and industrial enterprises – where all links in the chain, from initial design to the release of an innovative product, operate in constant cooperative partnership. An educational cluster is also understood as a complete system for the multi-level training of personnel for enterprises, based on the integration of educational institutions and employers. This system makes it possible to shorten the duration of personnel training, facilitate the employment of graduates in production, and form an adaptive system for skill enhancement that takes into account the current and projected demands of the sector. A scientific-educational cluster is understood as an association of several scientific and educational institutions. Their close partnership and interconnectedness lead to qualitative changes in both the individual components and the entire system.

Uzbekistan's experience is primarily manifested through educational clusters aimed at improving the educational and scientific processes surrounding our country's leading higher education institutions. In contrast, foreign models of

clusters typically integrate innovation, scientific research, and production, ensuring a broader synergy between the academic environment and industry.

The term "cluster" denotes a technology that originated in the United States of America and was introduced by American educators. In their view, it is advisable to first create one's own model based on previously known concepts before mastering new material, and then to consistently clarify and develop it while obtaining additional information. The etymology of the term comes from the English word "cluster," which literally means "a bunch" or "a spray" (for example, "a cluster of grapes" - a bunch of grapes). One of the modifications of this technology is the graphical organization of learning content, that is, creating diagrams or clusters that illustrate the semantic fields of a particular concept.

Creating a cluster allows students to creatively master the learning material and helps develop their logical thinking and cognitive abilities. As a teaching technology, the cluster has several advantages: students gain a deeper understanding of the topic being studied and have the opportunity to independently generalize and systematize the subject's content, as well as to identify and establish connections between ideas and concepts; they are drawn into working with the associative and semantic fields that form the cluster; and they gain practical experience in collective activity and interaction within a group.

In the case under consideration, the profile of the ethnocultural cluster is determined by the educational organization's area of activity and the supplementary educational program implemented in accordance with the federal state educational standard for primary general education. Such a profile defines the substantive orientations and methodological approaches that ensure the purposeful cultural immersion and systematic development of primary school-aged students.

The creation of the ethnocultural cluster was made possible through the coordinated interaction of students, families, the pedagogical community, and the national community of the city of Yakutsk, as well as through the utilization of socio-historical, cultural, educational, and extracurricular resources. The project's implementation shows that the tasks of forming cultural consciousness can be defined as predictable outcomes of a primary school-aged student's cultural immersion, achieved through the planning and introduction of an ethnocultural cluster.

Within our conceptual framework, upbringing is regarded as a pedagogically organized process for students to assimilate and accept core national values, as well as to master the system of universal cultural treasures characteristic of Uzbekistan's multi-ethnic society. Such a perspective ensures targeted cultural-educational work

aimed at forming stable moral principles and social competence in primary school-aged students.

Results and Discussion: The research confirmed the effectiveness of the ethnocultural cluster as an integrated organizational and pedagogical environment that contributes to the targeted cultural education and comprehensive development of primary school students. Theoretical analysis and empirical observations show that a cluster approach ensures the integration of the content-based, methodological, and resource components of education, which, in turn, enhances the quality of assimilation of cultural and spiritual-moral values .

It was determined that primary school has great educational potential due to the receptiveness of its students, their tendency to imitate, and the high authority of the teacher. The ethnocultural cluster actualizes these advantages by systematically organizing the interaction between students, families, educators, national communities, and external cultural and educational resources. This ensures sustainable outcomes in cultural education and the formation of social competence.

Conclusion: A comparative analysis of practices showed that foreign and Uzbek cluster models are complementary: while foreign clusters often integrate innovation, science, and industry, Uzbek clusters focus on improving educational and scientific processes centered around leading higher education institutions. Considering the national-cultural context and the tasks of inculturation for primary education, it is advisable to adapt the best aspects of both models.

The practical significance of the research is in substantiating cluster technology as a tool for increasing the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. It is recommended to further expand the introduction of ethnocultural clusters in the primary education system, to develop instructional materials for their practical application, and to organize intersectoral collaboration with the participation of educational institutions, research centers, and national communities.

Overall, implementing an ethnocultural cluster is a promising strategy for shaping a spiritually, morally, and culturally competent individual in a primary school student, who can navigate a multi-ethnic society and actively realize their social and educational potential.

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