

CREATING AN OPTIMAL UNIVERSITY EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AS A WAY OF FORMATION OF TOLERANCE

Nowadays the problem of environmental education at the university can be actual because we are at the beginning of creating a new society, taking into account the new century, educational reforming and different social processes. In this connection the role of a teacher is very important. Although a teacher may successfully establish an environment conducive to language acquisition in the classroom, what the students face outside the classroom may have a greater impact on affective sphere in general. No doubt, he/she is responsible for tolerance education, creating an optimal environment, i.e. all necessary teaching tools should be applied to educate a person, a specialist of new formation.

Thus the goal of this article is to briefly analyze the conditions which can provide improving students' tolerance during their learning.

Our review (Hutchinson, 2003; Hossain, 1997) allows describing the definition of the phenomenon "tolerance": it means to tolerate or put up with differences. It means showing respect for a race, religion, age, gender, opinions, and ideologies of other people or groups and at same time it means different things to different people. It is when something is disagreeable that tolerance is expected, and in more politically correct cultures, demanded. In this way tolerance can be shown in many ways. A person might fully disagree with others on any issue from religion to same sex marriage, while at the same time respecting those with different opinions and treating them with dignity and respect.

There is an opinion (Avery, 2002; Hutchinson, 2003) that tolerance is sometimes one-sided. Those who disagree with a particular issue must respect opinions of those who advocate it, but some advocates feel justified in labeling those who disagree with hateful terms, and vice versa. People on both sides of an issue must be tolerant of each other, in order for tolerance to be effective. When it comes to controversial issues, tolerance may also represent a "let's agree to disagree" stance. It does not mean that a person has to accept or embrace words, actions, or ideas that are against his or her values or beliefs. It simply means that each person agrees to respect the other's right to his or her feelings on the matter. When both parties have expressed their opinions, and it is obvious that neither is likely to change position, agreeing to disagree is often the most amicable outcome (Cornu, 2009).

As we can suppose, tolerance can be formed or developed during educational process with students. Pedagogical system should be aimed at it, creating both methodological and psychological conditions for effective educational environment.

Due to some scholars (Hutchinson, 2003; Richard-Amato, 1996), environmental education is a process of recognizing values and clarifying concepts in order to develop skills and added tools necessary to understand and appreciate interrelationship among participants, their culture and biophysical surrounding. It creates an overall perspective which acknowledges the fact that natural environment and man-made environment are interdependent. It should consider the environment in its totality and should be a continuous lifelong process beginning at the pre-school level and continuing through all stages. It should be interdisciplinary and examine major environmental issues from local, national and international points of view. It should utilize various educational approaches to teach and learn about and from the environment with emphasis on practical activities and first-hand experience. It is through this process of education that people can be sensitized about environmental issues.

Thus a student might find a particular question threatening and intimidating in one context yet stimulating and challenging in a different context, and this kind of environment cannot but create strong possibilities for formation of students' tolerance. We are going to discuss some of them.

As it is known, education depends on several factors, but a crucial step is learner's engagement. This is affected by their motivation and perception of relevance. These, in turn, can be affected by learners' previous experience and preferred learning styles and by the context and environment in which education is taking place. In adult educational theories (Cornu, 2009; Richard-Amato, 1996), teaching is as much about setting the context or climate for education as it is about imparting knowledge or sharing expertise. Then motivation can be intrinsic (from the student) and extrinsic (from external factors). Assessment is usually a strong extrinsic motivator for learners. Individual learners' intrinsic motivation can be affected by previous experience, by their desire to achieve, and relevance of education to their future. A teacher's role in motivation should not be underestimated. Enthusiasm for the subject, interest in students' experience, and clear direction (among other things) all help to keep students' attention and improve assimilation of information and understanding. We present some factors, which can be regarded as conditions for tolerance educational environment (see Fig.1):

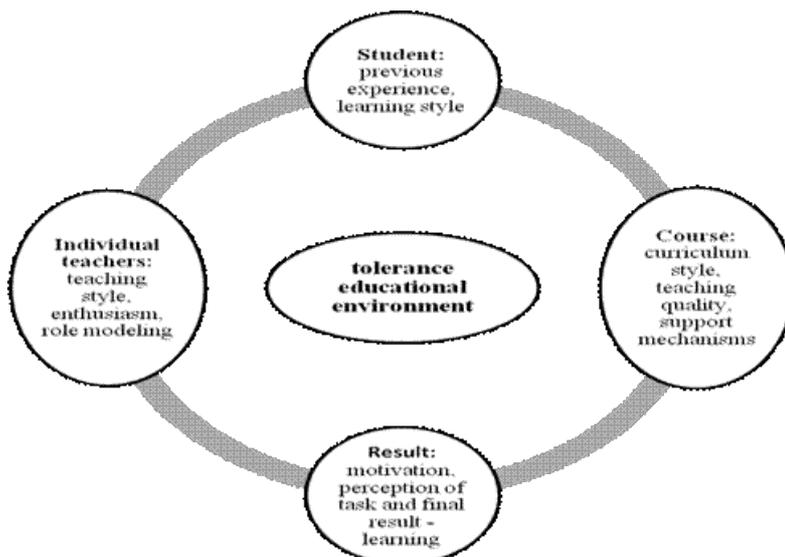


Figure 1. Factors influencing education

Due to this figure all factors are interconnected, and we cannot single out the most important of them. Anyway we support the idea (Bless, 1994; Magnan, 1986) of a significant role of teacher, because the latter provides the following:

- **Safety:** A teacher should aim at providing an environment in which learners feel safe to experiment, voice their concerns, identify their lack of knowledge, and stretch their limits. Safety can be compromised, for example, through humiliation, harassment, and threat of forced disclosure of personal details. Feedback on performance, a vital part of teaching, should be done constructively and with respect for the learner.

- **Belonging:** Many factors help to give a student a sense of belonging to a group or team - for example, being a respected member, having one's voice heard and attended to, being given a useful role, and having colleagues with similar backgrounds, experience, and goals.

- **Self-esteem:** Several of the points mentioned above feed directly into self-esteem through making the learner feel valued. Praise, words of appreciation and constructive rather than destructive criticism are important. It can take many positive moments to build self-esteem, but just one unkind and thoughtless comment to destroy it.

- **Self-actualization:** If a teacher has attended to the above mentioned factors, they have sought to provide ideal environment in which a learner can flourish. An ethos that encourages intrinsic motivation without anxiety is conducive to a "deep" learning approach. However, there may be some who remain unable to respond to education on offer. Teachers may need to consider whether the course (or that particular piece of study) is suitable for a particular student.

We consider teacher to be one of the most powerful variables in educational environment. Teacher's actions, attitudes (evidenced by tone, comments made), enthusiasm, and interest in the subject will affect learners indirectly. The capacity for subliminal messages is enormous. Inappropriate behavior or expression by a staff member will be noticed; at worst learners will want to emulate that behavior, at best they will be given tacit permission to do so. Respect for learners and their needs, praise, encouragement of participation can all lead to a positive learning experience. Lack of threat to personal integrity and self-esteem is essential, although challenges can be rewarding and enjoyable (Godwin, 2001).

To illustrate one of the forms of teaching process arranged we would like to describe a group discussion. Group discussion plays a valuable role in the all-round education of students, whether in problem-based learning and team projects or in the more traditional academic scenario of the tutorial or seminar. When it works well, discussion can allow students to negotiate meanings, express themselves in terms of the subject, and establish closer contact with academic staff than more formal methods permit. Discussion can also develop more instrumental skills of listening, presenting ideas, persuading, and working as a part of a team. But perhaps most importantly, discussion in small groups can or should give students a chance of monitoring their own education and thus gaining a degree of self-direction and independence in their studies. All these worthy aims require active participation and the ready expression of ideas. Yet it frequently doesn't work out this way. Indeed many tutors too readily fall back on their reserve positions of authority, expert, and prime talker. Many of the problems associated with leading small groups effectively are likely to be exacerbated with larger groups. If a teacher is leading a group discussion he/she will need to consider both the configuration of the group and one's own behavior. Groups often communicate poorly because the physical conditions make it difficult to communicate. For example, in a group of 10 students seated round a rectangular table, at least four students on either side of the table have no eye contact with each other, thus reducing participation. If you ask and answer questions all the time, even less interaction is likely. Being a democratic discussion leader involves making the right sort of nudges and interventions. The role can be made a lot less demanding by using more structure and less intervention in the group process. The teacher can minimize the internal involvement in the group process by organizing or structuring groups into smaller units, especially when the group process is likely to be problematical. This is particularly so when it is necessary to mobilize a sense of coherence and full participation among a largish group of students. A sequence of tasks might then be set. For example, students

work individually for five minutes drawing up a list. They share their ideas in pairs for 10 minutes. In groups of four to six, students write up categories on a large sheet of paper. The aims, objectives, and assessments should be signposted well in advance of a course and should be demonstrably fair. The teaching methods should build on learners' experience, creating a collaborative environment. Disseminating the findings of course evaluations, followed by staff training, helps to identify and correct undesirable behavior among faculty members. Evaluations should also include a means of reviewing the course's aims and objectives with the students.

Instead of conclusion we could say some degree of tolerance is necessary in any civilized society, but it is not realistic to believe that everybody can achieve complete tolerance on every issue. It goes against human nature, or the instinctive impulse of some to pull away from people or things that are different or unknown. Tolerance is a learned attribute, a virtue, which requires honest effort on the part of every person. It takes time to develop real tolerance, and it also takes commitment. It follows therefore that responsible and creative teaching is a problem solution in the educational system.

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SUMMARY

The article characterizes some educational conditions necessary for developing students' motivation, increasing efficacy of their education, and besides, promoting formation of their tolerance.

Keywords: educational process, tolerance, educational conditions, educational environment.

М.В. Яковлева
СОЗДАНИЕ ОПТИМАЛЬНОГО УНИВЕРСИТЕТСКОГО ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНОГО ПРОСТРАНСТВА КАК СРЕДСТВА ФОРМИРОВАНИЯ ТОЛЕРАНТНОСТИ

РЕЗЮМЕ

Статья представляет характеристику условий учебного процесса, которые необходимы для развития мотивации студентов, повышения их уровня успешного обучения и, вместе с тем, способствующих воспитанию толерантности.

Ключевые слова: учебный процесс, толерантность, условия учебного процесса, образовательное пространство.

М.В. Яковлева
СТВОРЕННЯ ОПТИМАЛЬНОГО УНІВЕРСИТЕТСЬКОГО ОСВІТНЬОГО ПРОСТОРУ ЯК ЗАСІБ ФОРМУВАННЯ ТОЛЕРАНТНОСТІ

РЕЗЮМЕ

Стаття характеризує умови навчального процесу, необхідні для розвитку мотивації студентів, підвищення їхнього рівня успішного навчання і, водночас сприятливі для виховання толерантності.

Ключові слова: навчальний процес, толерантність, умови навчального процесу, освітній простір
