

DEVELOPING PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY OF FUTURE MEDIATORS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL

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Abstract

The article describes the resources and didactic potential of the International Youth Summer School in the formation of future mediators' professional competence. Development of skills of the 21st century in the framework of the annual Summer School Intercultural Mediation in Education with participation of mediators and coaches from Europe and Russia are considered. The article presents the results of the study of personal and professional competency of students, participants of the annual International Summer School at Siberian Federal University. The survey is sponsored by the Russian Foundation for Basic Research (RFFR). No 18-013-00528 "The Study of Mediation Practices in the Field of Education for Harmonization of Interethnic Relations in a Multicultural Environment".

Keywords: mediation, conflict resolution, multicultural environment, summer school.

1 INTRODUCTION

Mediation is a procedure in which the conflicting parties can fix a mutually beneficial solution that will lead to a resolution of a conflict, jointly on a voluntary basis with the help of a mediator through negotiations [Shamlikashvili]. A mediator is an independent intermediary, authorized by the parties to perform a mediation procedure. Mediation is considered to be a profession of the future and the new competence of a modern teacher. Since 2017, the School of Education, Psychology and Sociology of Siberian Federal University (SEPS SibFU) has been holding an annual International Youth Summer School Intercultural Mediation in Education. The school welcomes Russian and foreign students of pedagogical and psychological majors from universities, colleges and young people working in social sphere. In 2017, 68 people participated in the School, in 2018 - 57 people, in 2019 – 76 people. The School is aimed at informing young people about the mediator's profession, presenting the best Russian and overseas mediation practices by visiting professors and coaches from Europe, CIS and different regions of Russia. Also, participants of the School undergo psychological and pedagogical diagnostics, immerse themselves in a multicultural educational environment and carry out probation as mediators in conflicts and negotiations.

The Summer School is a propaedeutic stage of training mediators at the Siberian Federal University, where the Master's program Mediation in Education has been implemented for two years. The Master's curriculum was developed in cooperation with colleagues from Europe and Russia. The content of educational courses is in line and in collaboration with the invited visiting professors from Portugal, Italy, Germany, Netherlands, France and practitioners of the Russian Federation.

1.1 Topicality

In 2013, the Letter 844/07 of Ministry of Education and Science of Russia "The Guidelines for the Organization of School Mediation Services" was released, and secondary schools began to create reconciliation services and mediation centres. The main purpose of them has been the introduction of innovative methods of dispute resolution and preventing conflicts between the actors of educational process. At the moment, all schools in Krasnoyarsk and most schools in the Krasnoyarsk region reported on the establishment of such services. On the other hand, pre-school organizations, colleges and universities usually don't establish reconciliation services. However, despite the spread of mediation technologies at schools in the region, administrative officers note the lack of professional knowledge and skills for the effective conduct of mediation procedures in the educational environment and conflicts prevention. Teachers and school psychologists are usually retrained through short-term courses to work as mediators and do not have a sufficient level of mediation competence. That determined the relevance of our research.

1.2 Degree of the problem development

The methodology and practice of training mediators in education is directly related to the policy of creating a safe educational environment. Undoubtedly, migration processes in the country and the region, the ethnic palette of participants in educational relations, migration and national policy of the state, the degree of self-government of educational organizations, their cooperation with political and social authorities influence the requirements for the competencies and labor functions of mediators. Types of training of mediators for the education system both abroad and in Russia include academic courses in higher education (mainly at the Master's level) or professional development of teachers, psychologists and social services specialists. The monitoring of mediators training showed that in Russia and CIS countries, the most common are retraining courses, sometimes quite short (up to 36/72 hours) to equip school staff with knowledge and skills for reconciliation services work.

According to the results of comparative studies of European scientists (TIME Project Partnership, 2015), currently in Europe there are two models of mediation in education:

- 1 Multicultural mediation in education as a solution to the problems of modern society experiencing cross-cultural problems that inevitably arise in multinational communities.
- 2 Intercultural mediation as a special form of mediation that emphasizes mediation in conflict resolution, and does not always contribute to the process of integration of immigrants.

Significant competences of mediators were determined on the basis of European training models (Foux-Levy, etc.) based on the results of the expert session of practicing mediators in Krasnoyarsk in 2018 [Smolyaninova, Popova, 2019]. It should be noted that in Russia mediators are often specialists in the legal sphere and also in the education system. Naturally, lawyers value knowledge of the legislation and the ability to work with documentation, and teachers and psychologists are focused on communicative competence and special personal qualities. In the opinion of Krasnoyarsk practitioners, school mediators need the following skills and competencies:

- negotiation skills,
- collection and interpretation of information,
- managing interaction between the parties,
- intercultural skills,
- stress-resistance,
- analysis of options for conflict resolution,
- active listening and empathy,
- neutrality.

These skills are consistent with the principles of mediation: voluntariness, confidentiality, cooperation and equality of the parties, impartiality and independence of the mediator. They form the mediation competence of a modern teacher. V. Semikin defines mediation competence as the ability to skillfully build interactions and, on occasion, to get out of difficulties, realizing and controlling the situation.

We understand the mediation competence of the teacher as an integrative property of the person which characterizes readiness to carrying out constructive negotiations between the conflicting parties in a neutral position of the mediator and ability to implement mediation techniques within the professional activity. We distinguish the following structure: cognitive, motivational-value, activity and reflexive aspects of this competence.

Mediation competence, according to Russian researchers, includes the following groups of skills [Cheglova]:

- The first group (personal) - determines the psychological ability of a mediator to be guided in their activities by the principles of mediation;
- The second group (technological) involves the ability to work with communication technologies;
- Third group (procedural) - determines the ability to guide the negotiation process.

Within the design of the Summer School, the forms of training for achievement of the planned educational results were allocated. These include active, practice-oriented forms (role-playing games, workshops, interactive lectures, case studies, viewing and analysis of video cases, supervision, etc.), which are implemented in the educational program of International Summer School. No less important

are the theoretical knowledge, such as the legal basis of mediation in education, code of conduct, culture of interpersonal communication, conflict study, which have been introduced within the Summer School. Practical mediation trainings and feedback from educators, group members and professional mediators contribute to the development of 21st century skills: critical and reflexive thinking.

2 METHODOLOGY

The methodological basis of the pedagogical design at the School is education model developed by scientists Lieberman, Foux-Levy, Segala (2005). The relevant and deficit resources of professional and personal development of mediators were identified as a result of the expert session and further they are evaluated by diagnostic methods. The participants of the Summer School are provided with a set of valid empirical methods (expert interview, included observation, survey, quiz, reflective essay) to record the educational outcomes achievements.

During three years of the International Summer School Intercultural Mediation in Education, psychological and educational diagnostics of participants were carried out. The description of the diagnostics is presented in the Table 1.

Table 1 Description of psychological and educational diagnostics used in the framework of the International Summer School Intercultural Mediation in Education.

No	Instrument	Year	Authors	Objective
1	Tolerance Index Express Survey	2017, 2018	G.U. Soldatova, O.A. Kravtsova, O.E. Kukhlaev, L.A. Shaigerova	To diagnose the general level of tolerance and its aspects: ethnic tolerance, social tolerance, tolerance as personality trait.
2	Types of Ethnic Identity	2017, 2018	G.U. Soldatova, S.V. Ryzhova	To diagnose ethnic identity and its flexibility under pressure of ethnic tension
3	A Measure of Emotional Empathy	2017, 2018, 2019	A. Mehrabian, N. Epstein	To diagnose empathy as a personality trait, to determine the level of empathic skills.
4	Self-assessment of Communication Competence	2017, 2019	I.A. Martyanova	Diagnosis of communicative competency indicators: positive and negative characteristics of communication, cognitive component, emotional component, behavioral component, communicative tolerance.
5	Conflict-handling Modes	2017, 2019	K. W. Thomas, R. H. Kilmann,	Description of typical types of behaviour/strategies in conflict situations.
6	Neuro-psychic Stability of a Person	2019	Military Medical Academy n.a. S. Kirov	Revealing some signs of personal problems and estimating probability of their development.
7	Stress Resistance Test	2019	N.V. Kirsheva, N.V. Ryabchikova	Assessing the neuropsychiatric stability of the personality.
8	Inter-ethnic Tolerance Test	2019	V.S. Sobkin, D.V. Adamchuk	Diagnosis of tolerant attitudes in the sphere of inter-ethnic relations.

2.1 Diagnostics of stress resistance

To determine neutrality and ability to resist stressful situations, two methods were selected: Evaluation of Neuro-psychic Stability of a Person (MMA n.a. S. Kirov) and Stress Resistance Test (N. Kircheva & N. Ryabchikova). According to input testing, the level of stress resistance among the participants of the Summer School is above average. Results such as below average and low were not recorded. In our opinion, this result stems from the comfortable conditions of the Summer School and the friendly atmosphere for the participants. The cohort of participants consists mainly of future teachers, psychologists or specialists in the social sphere. Therefore, these young people have a willingness to develop stress resistance and the ability to maintain high mental and physical performance under pressure. The results are shown in Fig.1.

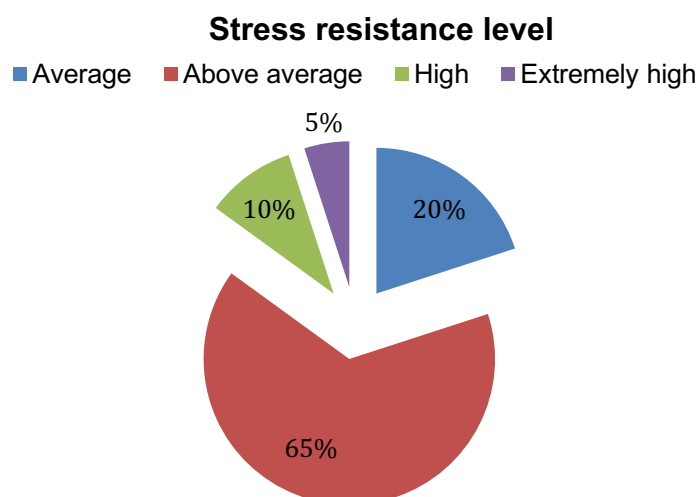


Figure 1 - Levels of stress resistance of participants of the Summer School Intercultural Mediation in Education.

At the end of the Summer School, participants were offered a test of Neuro-psyche stability, consisted of 84 questions, which had to be answered "Yes" or "No" within 30 minutes. The analysis of the answers can clarify some personal reactions, behavior and mental state in different situations. The School participants passed the test autonomously by the automated self-diagnosis technologies. The obtained results correlate with the input testing without significant changes.

2.2 Diagnostics of empathy

One of the 21st century skills – communication and emotional intelligence – can be measured using validated diagnostic techniques. We chose the questionnaire by A. Mehrabian and M. Epstein for the diagnosis of the empathic ability. According to the authors of the method, empathy is the leading mechanism of people's perception of each other in the process of communication. It involves emotional, sincere reactions to the behavior of other people. The technique allows to determine the level of understanding, compassion, sympathy in communication. [Soldatova, 2002].

Among 62 Summer School trainees tested in 2019, only three people were diagnosed a very low levels of empathy and nine showed low levels. Psychologists note that such people are usually focused on their own feelings and can be characterized as indifferent to the other people emotions. 48% of respondents were diagnosed with an average level of empathy. As a rule, this is due to a high level of empathy towards loved ones and indifference to others. 24% of respondents have a high level of empathy – a deep sense of empathy and acceptance of the position of the Other. Thus, the results of the study showed the need to develop students' empathy. The results are shown in Fig.2.

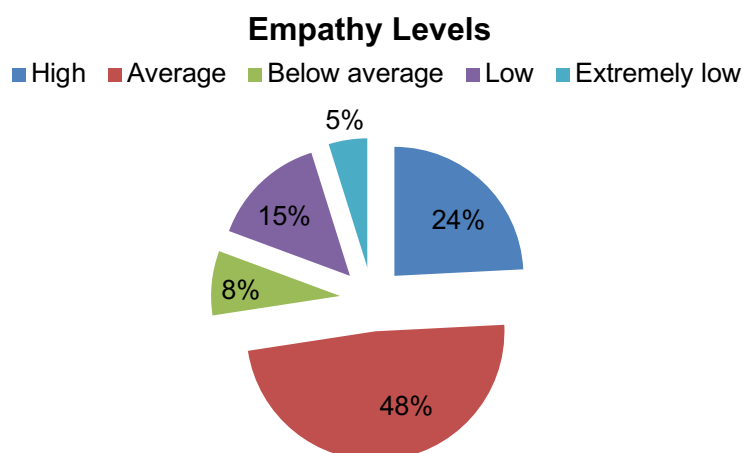


Figure 2. Levels of empathy of the participants of the Summer School Intercultural Mediation in Education.

2.3 Diagnostics of communication competence

In the modern world, the communication competence of students is formed in an open multicultural society. Researcher Irina Martyanova points out its following significant components:

- multicultural outlook;
- sense of solidarity;
- tolerance;
- intercultural skills;
- strive for intercultural dialogue.

The self-diagnosis of communication competence of students was presented in the form of a questionnaire with 50 questions. The interpretation of the results presents five levels: high, average with a tendency to high (medium-high), average, average with a tendency to low and low. Processing of the results showed that the majority of participants of the Summer School have average and medium-high levels. Medium-low and low levels of competence were not identified among the 60 students who passed the survey. The results of the diagnostics are presented in Fig. 3.

Communication competence levels

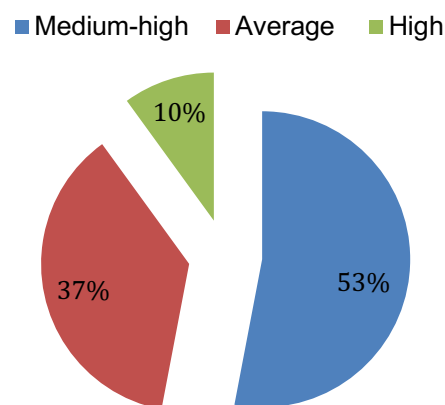


Figure 3. Levels of communication competence of the participants of the Summer School Intercultural Mediation in Education.

Thus, for 53% of the Summer School participants the average level of communication competence with a tendency to high is common. Students with this level can be described as sociable and friendly. They are able to adequately assess their partners, build intercultural dialogue and partnerships. In addition, students have a humanistic orientation in interethnic and ethno-cultural communication, they are ready to work in a team; have a fairly high level of empathy and tolerance in communication.

Students, who gave answers at the average level of communication competence (37%), on the one hand demonstrate high communicative activity, readiness to cooperation. On the other hand, they experience the following deficits: inability to adjust their behavior to the reaction of their partners; lack of public speaking skills, inability to conduct discussions and polemics, the presence of ethno-cultural barriers in communication; categorical judgments. The main problems in this case are connected with the technique of communication, which includes the complex of skills of productive communication activity. Taking to consideration the humanitarian profile of the training of students-participants of the Summer School, we can assume a high communicative potential, which will be accomplished in the process of their cultural and professional training, as well as in the process of their self-development.

Only 10 % of students rated their skills at a high level of communication competence. It means that students are ready to intercultural and interethnic contacts and equal dialogue communication. Students know the technology of cooperation, verbal and nonverbal means of productive communication; are able to conduct various forms of communication (dispute, discussion, polemics, etc.); they are able to find a common language with different people, are able to overcome their ethnocentrist prejudices, as well as adjust their own behavior in order to achieve mutual understanding.

2.4 Thomas-Kilmann conflict- handling mode instrument

N. Grishina's adaptation of the Thomas-Kilmann test was chosen to describe the types of behavior in conflict situations at the International Summer School Intercultural Mediation in Education . The basic dimensions are a person's emphasis on protecting their own interests or attention to the interests of the other people involved in the conflict. According to these two main dimensions, the authors have identified the following methods of conflict management:

- 1 competing as the desire to achieve their interests;
- 2 accommodating as sacrificing one's own interests for the sake of an Other;
- 3 compromising as readiness for mutual concessions;
- 4 avoiding, which is characterized by a lack of desire both for cooperation and competition;
- 5 collaboration, when the parties come to an alternative that fully satisfies interests of them both.

The results of diagnostics to determine the ways of conflict management among the participants of the Summer School are presented in Fig.4.

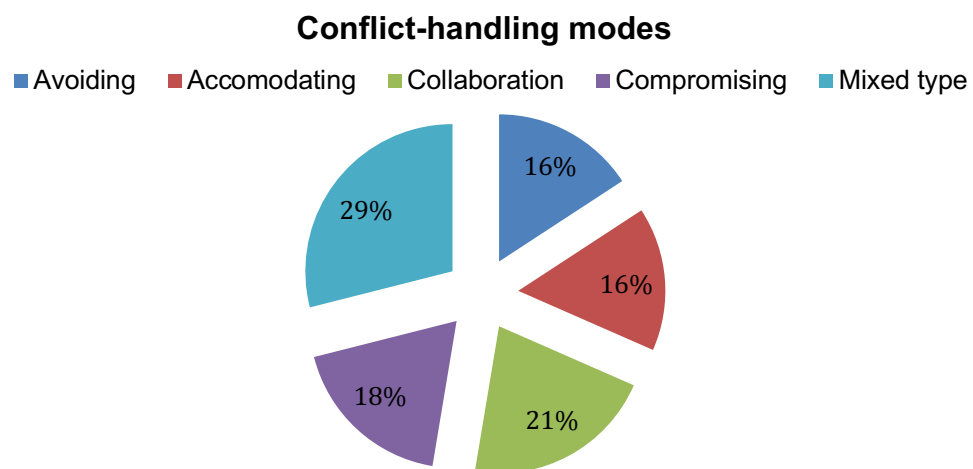


Figure 4. Conflict-handling modes of the participants of the Summer School Intercultural Mediation in Education (Thomas-Kilmann test).

According to the results of the survey, the leading conflict management strategies of the participants of the Summer School are collaboration (21 %) and compromising (18 %). The highest percentage of processed results received mixed strategies - almost a third of respondents have more than one dominating type. The most popular combinations were "compromise and avoiding" (half of the results), "cooperation and compromise" (a quarter of all mixed modes).

The results indicate the readiness of the participants of the Summer School to the productive resolution of conflicts, as most of them chose answers that assume productive behavior: collaboration and compromise. These strategies are characterized by a high level of orientation both on one's own interests and on interests of a partner. Such approach is based on preservation of interpersonal and intercultural relations.

None of participants chose the competing strategy in conflicts, which implies the force, authority or manipulation to defend one's interests, regardless of the others as the dominant. This indicates the careful attitude of the participants to the interests of their partners and to the relationships building. This result might be because some students participated in two or three Summer Schools since 2017. Also, Masters majoring in "Mediation in Education", whose conflict and mediation competence is been developed, took part in the School. Another important factor is that since 2018 School of Education, Psychology and Sociology of SibFU included courses on Mediation and Intercultural Education in the curriculum of future teachers-both Bachelors and Masters. The materials (Lectures, presentations, collections of case studies of multicultural conflicts, reports, books) of the Summer School Intercultural Mediation in Education 2017-2019 are presented in an open access on the SEPS SibFU website of shared learning.

2.5 Diagnostics of tolerant attitudes in the sphere of international relations

Among the 21st century skills (model 2025) there are adaptability, cooperation, intercultural interaction, social responsibility, empathy, negotiation skills. All these skills are necessary for the formation of a culture of tolerant behavior in interethnic communication (intercultural tolerance). The validated method of its diagnostics is the test of tolerant attitudes in the sphere of interethnic relations [V. Sobkin & D. Adamchuk]. The test consists of 12 questions containing 3 to 14 options, and also allows suggesting one's own answer. The answers value from 0.98 to -0.97 points, which are to be summed. A negative result corresponds to the pole of tolerance, a positive result - to the pole of intolerance. The responses results of the Summer School participants ranged from 0.02 to -5.28. The average level of all participants was -3.24, which indicates that they have tolerant attitudes in the field of interethnic relations.

3 RESULTS

The participants of the International Summer School Intercultural Mediation in Education 2017-2019 were students of pedagogical baccalaureate (profiles Tutor, Primary School Teacher), masters of Siberian Federal University, young teachers, social services specialists. The main principles of forming the content of the International Summer School are the following: continuity, multiculturalism, problem-solving, dialogue, openness, reflexivity, eventfulness. The project of the Summer School Intercultural Mediation in Education is described in the monograph "Lifelong Learning Practices in the Training of Future Teachers: Multicultural Context" (2017). The description of the stages of the School realization is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Stages of implementation of the Summer School Intercultural Mediation in Education.

No	Stage	Interaction with students	Stage description	Key sources/ platforms
1.	Preparatory	Online	Formulating the purpose, tasks and planned educational outcomes of the School, designing the content of the program, forms of events, describing educational and cultural events, online registration of participants on the website.	Social networks, messengers, email, Summer School website, Siberian Federal University website.
2.	Information	Online	Announcing the Summer School in the media and on the Internet, at international conferences and public lectures, posting working materials on the official website of the Summer School	Social networks, email, Summer School website, Siberian Federal University website.
3.	Event - Activity	Meeting, face-to-face	Conducting educational and cultural-educational events, participation in interactive lectures, trainings, educational projects design and defense, psychological and educational diagnostics	Science and Educational Environment of the School (SibFU Campus)
4.	Reflexive assessment	Face-to-face, online	Multi-step procedure for evaluating educational outcomes of the School participants (expert assessment, self-assessment), filling out sections "Reflection" and "Achievements", posting a report on the results of practice in an individual eportfolio on the website of SibFU, publication of photo and video report.	The official website of SibFU, individual ePortfolio.

Evaluation tool for educational results achievement of the Summer School Intercultural Mediation in Education was developed by the team of the School. The questions were compiled by lecturers and trainers (each provided 3 questions at the levels "Remembering" and "Understanding" of mediation in education). It had the following blocks:

- 1 Quiz (test questions with options),
- 2 Questions for understanding (open questions),

- 3 Self-assessment of emotional state,
- 4 Questions on goal setting and achievement of individual aims,
- 5 Feedback questions.

In our opinion, reflexive evaluation on various components of the educational results can not only check the knowledge, but also the depth of understanding, the degree of involvement in educational activities and satisfaction of the participants. It acts as a formative method of evaluation and personal self-determination. The questions of the evaluation tool allow students to reflect on the importance and relevance of the skills and knowledge, to rank the value attitude and to analyze the individual importance of different aspects of participation in the Summer school. Almost 90% of respondents noted the importance of new knowledge, acquaintance with peers, learning from the professionals' experience, communication in an informal environment while working on projects in the format of the Summer School. Only 4% (3 people) gave less than 70% correct answers to the questions of the School assessment tool. 84% of the participants wrote that they plan to use the knowledge, gained at School, in future or current professional activities. Students plan to make additional efforts: to get acquainted with new research and read books on mediation, to discuss the topic of conflicts in the educational environment with teachers, to look for additional places of practice for a deeper development of mediation competency.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The research outcomes are empirical data obtained during three years of the Summer School Intercultural Mediation in Education on validated and author's methods, analysis of educational results and for the development of professional competencies of future and working teachers. International Summer School Intercultural Mediation in Education confirmed its effectiveness and relevance among young people and students. The developed teaching materials, video lectures, presentations, video cases on mediation are used in the educational process for the Master's program "Mediation in Education" of the School of Education, Psychology and Sociology of Siberian Federal University.

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