

THEORETICAL PSYCHOLOGY AND METHODOLOGY OF PSYCHOLOGY

Strategy and methodology for the sociocultural reform of education

Alexander G. Asmolov

Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia

This chapter explains the strategy for the sociocultural reform of education as a socialization institution that plays a key role in the focused development of value systems, standards, paradigms, and behavioral patterns in the population of Russia. The author reveals the role education plays in modeling such phenomena of social development as the social consolidation of society, the civil identity of representatives of various social groups and national cultures, the encouragement of social confidence, the successful socialization of oncoming generations, and the social stratification of the population of Russia. This chapter also considers the benefits of the sociocultural reform of education as a growth driver for the competitive strength of the individual, the society, and the state and for the further design of long-term programs for the social and economic development of Russia, including the federal education-development program.

Keywords: sociocultural remodeling of education, tolerance, activity, education standards, sociocultural development of education, growing generation's, education reform.

The famous psychologist L. Vygotsky noted that understanding a partner's idea without awareness of his or her reasons is incomplete. In this regard I shall briefly outline here the reasons for designing a strategy for the sociocultural reform of Russian education.

The basic theme of this work is the development of a conceptualization of the mission and nature of education as a leading social activity that generates social and mental aspects of public life, such as modeling civil, ethnocultural, and panhuman identity; that explains the dynamics of social differentiation and stratification in society; that adopts various traditions, values, standards, and paradigms of behavior for large and minor social groups; that encourages the acquisition of a repertoire of personal, social, and professional competencies supporting the individualization, socialization, and professionalization of an individual within a system of people

and professions; and that views the development of human potential as the most important condition for national competitive performance.

An attitude toward education as one of the leading social activities formalizing a historic and evolutionary process together with the other socialization institutions (the family, the mass media, religion) leads to the ideas of a school of thought covering cultural and pragmatist psychology developed by L. Vygotsky, A. Leontyev, and A. Luriya and to social constructionism, a postmodern methodology congenial to this school. The social-constructionism paradigm is most concisely presented by Berger and Lukman (1995) and by Dzherzhen (2003).

The nonclassical methodology of cultural and pragmatist psychology and the methodology of the social modeling of reality made it possible for my colleagues and myself in the period between 1988 and 2008 to propose and develop a set of ideological constructs that have a specific influence on the development of a national education system:

- the “practical psychology of education” as an attitude for understanding and maintaining the importance of each student’s individual growth
- “variative education” as a model for providing an adequate choice of educational paths for each person (Asmolov, 1996)
- “tolerance” as a civilization standard for the sustainable development of an individual as well as of diverse social groups (Asmolov, 2007)

In regard to their genre, these ideological constructs refer to specific conscious attitudes that the classical national philosopher A. Losev and the historian M. Geftser called “generative hypotheses” (Geftser, 2004). The requirement for societal sociocultural reform also pertains to the genre of generative hypotheses. These hypotheses are the most complete expression of the general aim of our 20-year-long research—namely, an ideological attitude for modeling education as a social activity leading to civil-society building and the development of human individuality within a variable environment.

From business and economic reform to the sociocultural reform of education

Let us regard the events of the contemporary history of Russian education through the perspective of the necessity for the sociocultural development of education (NFPK, 2006) and a similar range of ideas presented in the Public Chamber report *Education and Society: Whether Russia Is Ready to Invest in Its Future* (2007).

Since the turn of the century changes in Russian education as well as in the entire country have affected almost every resident. Education has survived but is still suffering from the times of stabilization (the beginning of the 1990s), restructuring and evolution (mid-1990s), and, finally, reform (from the end of the 1990s until 2008). The reform period dates from 1997 and is characterized by the design of business and economic projects for education development (Asmolov, Dmitriev, Klyachko, Kuzminov, & Tikhonov, 1997). The advances, failures, and social and economic consequences of each of the above-mentioned periods are the topics of specific historical and analytical research, which, like any other research into contemporary history, is required in order to design the further development of education.

Moreover, an even brief analysis of the contemporary history of education reform makes it possible to conclude that education-generated social and mental phenomena, as a rule, are beyond the reach of various education-development goals:

- the construction of personal identity within a polyethnic, polyconfessional, and polycultural state
- the social and spiritual consolidation of the society
- the social mobility of an individual, which requires the equality and availability of education in order to reduce the risk of social stratification
- social standards of tolerance and the mutual trust of representatives of various social groups, religions, and national cultures
- the successful socialization of the oncoming generation
- the improvement of the competitive ability of the individual, the society, and the state

In the search for additional paths toward the sociocultural transformation of the education system I shall define the nature of the social and mental phenomena of education. I shall try to express this subject matter by way of the following questions:

1. What kind of risks do politicians and executive officials face when instituting education reform without due regard for the social and mental phenomena of education?
2. How does education influence the following manifestations of social differentiation and the stratification of society?
 - “social elevator” (the upward mobility of social and economic status within the society)
 - “social shaker” (the interfusion of various social strata of the society)
 - “social well” (the downward mobility of social and economic status within the society)
3. Which social activities and programs promote switching from the declaration of the priority of education as a social value to the actual priority of education as a national policy objective?
4. What role does education play in an individual’s civil-identity modeling as well as in an understanding of people’s historical “common destiny” as the solidarity of Russian society?
5. Can education as the institution for individuals’ socialization be competitive vis-à-vis other institutions for the socialization of oncoming generations: the family, religion, and the mass media?
6. How can one turn education management into a resource for the reduction of various risks and of social and interpersonal conflicts, including conflicts arising because of xenophobia, ethnophobia, migrantophobia, social aggression, and intolerance?
7. How can one promote tolerance, social confidence, and mutual understanding within Russian society through education, including education-system management based on education standards?

The range of issues mentioned above makes it possible to define the subject matter of the sociocultural reform of education.

In order to outline ways to justify the necessity and urgency of these and similar issues I shall discuss the barriers of the collective consciousness that prevent construction of an ideological attitude toward the sociocultural reform of education.

Barriers of collective consciousness that prevent education reform

Globalization, the inevitable involvement of Russian society in global processes, and the already-present era of communicative civilization have greatly affected political, sociocultural, and economic processes in Russia.

Changes occurring in society have resulted in society's transfer from a relatively stable stage to a dynamic stage of development—from a "closed" society to an "open" society; from an industrial society to a postindustrial information society; from a totalitarian society to a civil society.

The social, mental, and economic differentiation within society peculiar to these changes as well as the appearance of various patterns of ownership became a prerequisite for the coexistence of public, private, and domestic education and thus for the inevitable social transformation of the education system as a whole.

This transformation is commonly regarded as a direct consequence of focused reforms. Such a description of the changes in the sphere of education is not quite accurate and is in many respects naïve.

In effect, behind the social changes in Russian education are not only attempts at focused reform by governmental authorities but also numerous poorly controlled and spontaneous processes; some of those processes are particularly related to initiatives of various social groups; others, to the passive reaction of the education system to various budgetary restrictions. As a result attempts at education reform, including reform of the business and economic development of education, have taken place against the negative expectations of various population strata and of many representatives of the education community. There is a variety of causes for the corresponding disillusionings.

Failure to motivate the population

One of the main faults of social policy in post-Soviet Russia was the complete disregard of the population's mindset. The psychology of mass consciousness may derail social reforms, even those thoroughly calculated, by ignoring people's drives and concealing goals from certain strata of the population. The poor efficiency of various state reforms and programs was related to an attempt to administer complex social systems without motivation or ideology. In fact, however, this ideology, in the context of the methodology of social constructionism, should be the motivation for social behavior in both large and minor social groups.

Reformers often disregard the fact that motivational schemes for social reforms are as important for the purpose of their execution as the economic assessment of various programs of social reform. Consequently, not only do reforms face the severe opposition of the local population but also in certain cases they face protests by various oppositional political groups.

Negative experiences with previous reforms in the field of social policy

The failure of previous social-policy reforms, including attempts to reform the education system, is to a certain degree due to the fact that they were designed without regard either to the strategic priorities of the society and its development vector or to the social and mental phenomena of education.

Various attempts to reform education have had, for the most part, the following three common characteristics:

- They were based on the prevailing interests of the professional pedagogical community (education reform from the inside).
- They were based exclusively on narrow economic considerations (economic and business determinism in the design of programs).
- They lacked an analysis of political, social, and psychological risks in their execution related to the expectations and motives of various social strata.

While giving their formulas priority and declaring them to be the social mission of education, the representatives of the sphere of education in fact deluded themselves with memories of the former fame of Russian education as “the best education in the world”; they suffered from the disease of “education narcissism.” The representatives of the economic community insisted on the necessity to create education programs with due regard for budgetary and tax considerations while disregarding consideration of education as an institution for the reproduction of human capital assets and its role in the development of the national economy. Consequently, education reforms were viewed as substantial and valuable in the context of the external environment; they were often confined to requirements for additional funds and were slowly implemented because of ineffective use of available funds.

As a result, first the “market” myths and later the “labor-market” myth turned into goals in themselves, and the goals of improving quality of life and reproducing human and intellectual capital assets were reduced to demands for facilities, services, and instruments of the market economy.

Narrowing down of the national policy for education reform to programs solely for the reform of education as an independent branch of national development

In the design of various education programs (Schedrovitskiy, 1993) one can detect three target areas toward which these programs are oriented: the education environment, the education sphere, and the education space (Gromyko, 1996).

When a program is oriented toward the *education space* as the target area, it comprises such socialization institutions as the family, the mass media, religion, and cultural traditions and innovations, which, together with education as the leading social activity, define social development.

When a program is oriented toward the *education sphere*, the focus is on the management of education as a specific field of social and economic development, similar to health care or the agricultural or industrial sector.

When a program is oriented toward the *education environment*, efforts are focused on the basic and professional education of an individual within a certain

educational institution (kindergarten, school, training college, institution of higher education).

Definition of the target area helps identify the ideology and methodology behind program construction, mission, scale, problems, tasks, and objectives as well as the mechanisms and resources required for program implementation.

When the target area of the program is the education space, the focus is on the design of the national education program (the so-called presidential program). The mission of this program is the implementation of nationwide ideology and policy; this implementation allows achieving such social and mental goals as harmonization of the society, social stratification, improvement of national competitive ability, and formation of a civil identity as the ground for the development of a democratic society. In the context of such a program, education acts as a leading social activity generating civil identity and forming the mentality, values, and social-behavioral norms of independent individuals and of both large and minor social groups. In such a program, education standards act as a social contract, while the improvement of the quality and the availability of education and the resulting social mobility of individuals act as instruments for achieving the educational mission. This national program of education development as a program for the sociocultural reform of education has the following characteristics:

- an open, “subdepartmental” nature
- a forward-looking rather than a reactive strategy for social development (education causes social development, particularly in the formation of labor markets)
- recognition of education as a leading social activity rather than as a provider of up-to-the-minute market needs
- innovative management

If the target area is the education sphere as one of the social and economic branches of national development, federal or regional education-development programs emphasize tasks and techniques for servicing these branches. As a rule such programs have these characteristics:

- a closed, “departmental” nature
- the tendency to narrow program objectives and techniques down to the objectives and techniques for servicing separate spheres, primarily, business and the economy
- a reactive development strategy caused by education being governed by current market requests
- a deideologized nature
- emergency management

Programs of education as a separate branch of national development are frequently confined to being either compensatory or operational.

Compensatory programs are aimed mostly at closing funding gaps and developing material and technical facilities. They frequently degenerate into “patch-the-holes” programs at the federal, regional, or municipal level.

Operational programs are aimed at supporting the already-existing education system through restructuring. These programs' implicit goal is maintenance (or survival) but not development.

In education-oriented programs innovations are mostly confined to changing such regulatory and economic mechanisms of education management as standardization and to improving education quality, availability, efficiency, and the resulting social mobility by means of business and economic reforms.

Various federal and regional programs oriented toward developing and servicing the education sphere can also increase education efficiency, its adaptive capacity within national social and economic development. At the same time programs aimed at the education sphere only as an independent branch of such development to a large extent narrow the capacities of education as the leading social activity for promoting both social development and an increase in national competitive strength.

On the basis of the foregoing discussion, one may obtain the impression that there is an opposition between programs oriented toward the education space and programs oriented toward education development as a separate branch of national social and economic development. In fact, however, the business and economic development of education as a branch of national social and economic development is included in the master plan for the design of a national program of sociocultural reform of education as a social activity aimed at forming civil identity and increasing national competitive ability in the contemporary world.

From education priority as a social myth to education priority as an objective of national policy

Because they appear self-evident and banal, a range of general issues and problems are treated as axioms but not as tasks requiring joint efforts for their solution. One of these issues is the importance of education. Why is the view that education (including science) is a priority so greatly different from the actual state of education, and why does this view continue as a myth, despite many declarations and assurances?

The competitive ability of countries in the stage of postindustrial development is defined by the level of the availability and the quality of the education system. Russia has to make education a top priority. This strategic imperative of the nation's policy also has an ideological aspect—to ensure that education becomes truly valued by the Russian population. Only if it is a top priority can education become a true resource for increasing the competitive ability of individuals, the society, and the state.

It should thus be once again emphasized that ideology in its sociopsychological sense is the main source of motivation for both large and minor social groups. The four essential instruments that the political elites of all nations use to achieve their ideological goals are the mass media, education, religion, and culture. Whoever is in control of these key socialization institutions, which shape the collective consciousness, determines the situation in the political arena.

The Soviet ideology used education, the mass media, and culture explicitly or implicitly to shape the national identity of what came to be known as “a Soviet

citizen.” The lyrics of a once-popular song come to mind: “My address has no block number and no street—my address is the USSR.”

The USSR post-collapse identity crisis, which was created as the Soviet Atlantis sunk to the historical ocean bed, made the mass consciousness of people of various nationalities, confessions, and regions turn into “homeless consciousness,” as various studies of the national consciousness and identity proclaim (Vishnevskij, Danilova, Epatova, Kropotov, Loginov, Lukina, Mihaylenko, Oskolskaya, Ryzhova, Sagitova, Hodzhaeva, Homyakov, Chernysh, Shaidarova, Shumilova, 2006). In this situation a pro-active ideology specifically designed to shape a new national identity can provide the “glue” necessary to rejoin the weakened links in Russia’s social networks.

In order to meet this goal it would be most helpful to use education as a socialization institution in order to design new standards that promote recovery from the identity crisis and formation of a civil society as a society that increases the life chances of the population (Darendorf, 2002). The mass media could perform this task, but this strategy would require many more resources than the education strategy.

Essentially, the social design of the identity of the individual as a globally minded person and a nationally minded citizen is the mission of the sociocultural reform of education, and this project thereby contributes to Russia’s progress in building a civil society.

In order to accomplish this mission the educational structure should conform with the strategic objectives of Russia’s development. It should prepare national standards such as conventional norms and social obligations actualized by means of a social contract, as well as meet the requirements of the individual, the family, the society, and the state for education as the institution of advance socialization; these requirements are different from outsiders’ requirements and ambitions, in which school is an eternal scapegoat.

In order to understand the potential, the restrictions, and the risks of the business and economic theory of education reform, one has to go beyond viewing education as a narrow and administration-governed sphere and instead regard the prospective vectors of education transformation as the leading social activity within the system of the political, social-economic, mental, and cultural development of the country.

The risk of undervaluing the social and mental phenomena of education in public policy

As has been stated above even a sketchy analysis of the place and function of the education sphere in Russian society shows how the view of education priority differs from social reality.

Undervaluation of social and mental phenomena in the education system reflects social attitudes toward education and toward the results of education as a social activity.

The following are some examples of the increasing risks in the process of socialization of the oncoming generation in contemporary society:

- the lack of a distinct strategy for youth policy and of support for public associations for children, teenagers, and young people oriented toward solving the problems of individual identity and youth identity formation
- the crisis of the family as a socialization institution, which is expressed in the deadaptation of the two-parent family (single-parent family, conflicted family, antisocial family), family destabilization, and the ineffective performance of the family in its function of socializing children and individualizing their personalities
- the rise in orphanhood
- the phenomenon of children begging
- the commercialization of teenagers, as seen in increasing disturbances in the moral and ethical development of teenagers and in the possibility of their interaction with criminal social classes
- the rise in teenagers' aggressive and violent behavior (destructive actions that violate the personal and physical security of people and discourage the maintenance of material and spiritual values; antisocial sexual behavior; early drug abuse; antisocial and illegal acts)
- the rise in child and juvenile delinquency
- the increase in the number of children who are victims of violence
- the decrease in the age for alcoholism and the proliferation of drug addiction and toxicomania
- personal immaturity, including moral immaturity
- the inadequate strategies of teenagers and young people for coping with obstacles in life

This list of phenomena and tendencies can be continued. But these are sufficient for positing the lack of action by social institutions in preventing specific defects that I define as *socialization defects* (in the family, the mass media, the culture, pedagogical teams, law-enforcement agencies, youth organizations, etc.) and for arriving at the following conclusions.

First, the socialization of children, teenagers, and young people has undergone major changes in this era of mass communication, the Internet, cyberspace, the shift of values occurring in Russia, and so forth. Sociological surveys confirm the social nonhomogeneity of this generation, its multidimensionality, and its tendencies for breaking the link with previous generations. Moreover, Russia, like other countries, is still at the opening stage of providing a systematic program for generational social-profile research and of describing the role of identity in social development.

A further conclusion is that the education reforms of preceding periods were developed using strategies of education advancement that were based on a vague social portrait of the next generation. One should scarcely need to give detailed reasons for the fact that education reform instituted in an such environment of "generation obscurity" presents one of the highest risks of any social reform introduced in the world today.

Second, even a random sample of the cited examples proves that the traditional socialization institution, the family, is going through a profound crisis. Moreover,

the family fails in competition with other socialization institutions, such as religion, the mass media, and the Internet. For this reason the system of socialization cannot be regarded without studying the interaction of education with such other social institutions as the family, religion, and mass communication; these institutions to a large extent define the “zone of proximal development” of the next generation (to use Vygotsky’s term). Thus, for many reasons, including departmental barriers, these “cooks” spoil the “broth” of the growing generation. No wonder that this generation can spring sudden surprises on Russian society.

Third, because education is the most nationally manageable socialization institution, it was and is now burdened with providing compensation for the social defects caused by more spontaneous and less manageable socialization institutions, primarily the family and the mass media. As a result, education is going through a crisis anchored in the social expectations and political tasks relating to the compensation of family socialization defects, to say nothing of the defects arising from the powerful nonformal education provided by the mass media and the Internet.

Fourth, all the above-mentioned general characteristics of the growing generation’s socialization process should also be considered with due regard for the specific nature of socialization during the historical transition period Russia is in (Levada & Shanin, 2005). The sententious saying “May you live in interesting times!” can refer to the socialization process in Russia today. The “youth crisis,” also called the “storm and stress age” by psychologists, is traditional for teenagers; this crisis is amplified by the social-transition crisis, by its ambiguity and shift in values. The phenomenon of “negative identity” emerges and strengthens when values are shifting and people’s associations are based on the opposition “friend-or-foe” or “us-versus-them” (Gudkov, 2004). The increase of negative identity is expressed in various xenophobic and nationalistic attitudes as well as in the organizing of various extremist youth groups. The phenomenon of “negative identity” is especially important for understanding the specific nature of identity formation as a process of teenagers’ identification with certain social groups.

A thorough examination of the above-described pattern of the socialization process and of various socialization institutions that follow that process—the family, education, religion, and the mass media—reveals the paradox of an education-reform strategy that ignores both educational social phenomena and education as a national priority.

Without understanding the systemic nature of all the above-mentioned social and mental phenomena of education we shall also remain indifferent to the design of education as an institution for successful personal and professional socialization, as it provides for the growth of social and economic national resources and promotes the growth of national capital by means of human capital accumulation.

The underestimation of the stratum-forming function of education as a “social elevator” providing for the social, professional, and academic mobility of the individual often results in the growth of residential segregation, of social and social-psychological inequality, and of education as a kind of “social well.”

Various educational social phenomena are especially distinctly revealed in preschool education, basic formal education, extended education for children and teenagers, and special education for physically and mentally low-functioning children. Thus, society claims that education is responsible not only for children’s

education but also for overcoming the negative effects caused by the defects of all socialization institutions.

All the above-mentioned social phenomena are in accord with historical social expectations that the pedagogical profession, particularly the profession of teacher, provides a social value, and with the sneaking expectation that education will balance the socialization defects emerging in the family because of the influence of the mass media and other socialization institutions.

When these phenomena are ignored, federal and regional education programs are relegated strictly to the education sphere, and education is confined to the service sector of the national economy. As a result social and role relations between the society and education start to be constructed in the manner of relations between clients and service suppliers. If the state and the society directly or indirectly take social positions as consumer and client toward education, then interaction between these parties and education is settled under the principle of pragmatic exchange (me- you). Consequently, the oppositional principle of us-them is established, and it obstructs the social partnership of education, business, the family, the society, and the state. In the present social and historical situation, we face the increased risk of establishing the negative-identity society, represented by the “no-background” generation.

Education standards as a conventional norm reflecting requirements of the state, the society, the family, and the school

In order to reduce the social risks of social development described above, we need a conceptually different approach to the creation of basic education standards (Kodakov & Kuznetsov, 2006a, 2006b); the professional pedagogical community has been searching for such an approach for many years.

In my opinion one such approach to the design of basic education standards that comply with the strategy of the sociocultural reform of education is the systematic and pragmatic approach developed within the methodology of cultural and pragmatic psychology. This paradigm integrates the structural units of a competence-building approach and of an approach based on the behavioral methodology of providing expertise, knowledge, and skills (Asmolov, Burmenskaya, Volodarskaya, Karabanova, & Salmina, 2007); these approaches have been used previously for the development of education standards.

There are two integral characteristics of the systematic and pragmatic approach: the standardization of education and the variability of education.

The evolutionary significance of standardization lies in securing stable communication of cognitive patterns characteristic of a specific stage in the development of civilization. Standardization has three aspects:

- as a prerequisite for the adaptation of oncoming generations to solving a wide range of typical life challenges
- as an instrument of knowledge management within the social, economic, ethnic, and psychological diversity of various social systems
- as a condition for ensuring the unity of the education environment, which I define as the “unity of diversity”

The evolutionary significance of variability lies in the development of the creative potential of oncoming generations:

- Variability acts as a prerequisite for the enhancement of an individual's development in overcoming life challenges within the diversity of various social systems.
- Variability ensures the management of alterations in education systems at the federal, regional, municipal, and school levels.

Education standardization is the system of restrictions imposed on educational variability because of the necessity of securing students' equal opportunities within the education space as the space of the unity of diversity.

Education variability is, first, the ability to respond to the motives and opportunities of various groups of students and to the personal habits of individual students; second, it provides the possibility of managing alterations and innovations within the common, diverse education space.

In general, the standardization and the variability of education promote both the socialization and the individualization of the oncoming generation and the management of operations and alterations within the system of education at the federal, regional, municipal, and school levels.

The following basic points of reference for the design of education standards are contained within the systematic and pragmatic approach with due regard for the above-mentioned peculiarities of the nature of standardization and variability as the aspects of education social activity that ensure stability of this activity and its innovative potential:

- motivation as a leading target of education in the information era as well as formation of the "ability to renew competences" (Kuzminov, 2004)
- value systems that reflect requirements and guarantees by the family, the society, and the state of the conditions that ensure the socially expected quality of education
- basic education standards as conventional social standards that ensure the availability, quality, and efficiency of education by the state, the society, the family, and the school; requirements for education results, education spheres, and the scope of education at various levels and stages; training terms, structure of sample education programs, procedures of control over student assessment at various stages of individual development in school-children's personalities
- variable psychological and pedagogical techniques for providing universal cognitive activities that ensure solution of academic tasks and construction of a worldview at various education stages (Asmolov, 1996)

The axiomatic goal of the above-mentioned points of reference for the design of education standards is an adjustment for the formation of individual mindset and for motivation for education as the basic motivation of individual development. Nevertheless, the emphasis in the design of education standards is, usually, switched to ensure a personal result obtained in the course of education and upbringing. The development of an individual's identity that is required to reach personal self-sufficiency acts as one of these personal results.

The formation of personal identity as the objective of school education

Value guidelines of sociocultural methodology for developing education as a major societal activity, like those guidelines mentioned above, allow us to set the task of forming civil identity, ethnocultural identity, and panhuman identity. Three different types of model programs consistent with these identities lay the groundwork for this development:

- The complex of model programs to form *civil identity* are directed toward creating a person's identity as a citizen of his/her land and nurturing civil patriotism and love of the Motherland: Russian as the official language, history of the Motherland, native literature, social science, civic studies, etc.
- The complex of model programs to form *ethnocultural and regional identity* (unification with a "minor Motherland"—village, town, region) are directed toward national enculturation and knowledge of the history of a village, town, region: national language, regional study, national history, national literature, etc.
- The complex of model programs to form *panhuman identity* are directed toward enculturation, making a person akin to all humankind through knowledge of the cultural products of the world at large and the overall history of humankind, panhuman values, and the achievements of science and technology: mathematics as a universal language for communication, informatics, physics, the outer world, world history, world literature, world arts culture, economics, etc.

The proposed classification of the programs based on identity provides the opportunity to avoid a mechanical administrative and local system of classifying the educational standards into federal, regional, and school components and to reveal the genuine value objectives of education that the model educational programs should be directed at achieving.

The complex of programs for creating civil identity, ethnocultural identity, and panhuman identity provides the basis for adopting value-based and normative characteristics of a personality as a special "ideal type," a representative of civil society (Veber, 1990):

- self-perception of oneself as a member of Russian society who respects the history of the Motherland and is responsible for its destiny in the modern world; patriotism
- adoption of the major values of one's national culture and "minor Motherland" culture
- readiness to have a dialogue with and to cooperate with people of different persuasions, national cultures, and creeds; tolerance of opposite views, varying positions, varying outlooks; generosity
- awareness of personal involvement in the destiny of the whole of humankind
- possession of universal ways of knowing the world

When there is a successful solution to the task of overcoming the identity crisis in the country in the context of education as a leading societal activity, the likelihood of achieving the following social effects increases:

- self-perception of the oncoming generation as citizens of Russia and the world
- development of civil society
- growth in the competitiveness of Russian society in the modern world
- reduction in the risk of the country's disintegration into separate territories along ethnic, confessional, and/or regional lines and in the risk of various social conflicts (ethnic, confessional, interregional)

The last of these effects concerns the identity crisis in our country, as analyzed in the next section.

Education as the institution for achieving social trust and tolerance and for preventing xenophobia

Given the growing social diversity in Russia, the education system faces the prominent tasks of reaching the social and psychological harmonization of various social strata and of decreasing social strains among members of different confessions and national cultures. These social tasks require implementation of a state education policy that embodies the principles of freedom of religion, tolerance, peacefulness, patriotism, and the secularity of education, thus turning education into the institution that increases social trust and harmony in Russia.

To develop education in such a way as to promote the formation of tolerance and the prevention of extremism, the following social strains in society should be taken into account:

- growing societal diversity and difficulties in the civil-identification process; making decisions about people based on their place in the system of civil, social, professional, national, religious, and political relations
- ambiguity of values and social objectives at the individual and social-group levels, which has emerged in a short time as a result of changes in the political and economic spheres and in the national and governmental system of the state
- growing hypermobility of the population, which has resulted from the dynamics of the ethnogeographical social structure in circumstances of turbulent, nonregulated migration processes and has led to alteration of the social divisions among various ethnic, confessional, generational, and social strata of the society, and thus to increased social strain
- emergence of societal stereotypes that recognize acts of cruelty, xenophobia, ethnophobia, and migrantophobia as a common social norm and, hence, evident and nonevident sanctioning of the use of negative, aggressive images by people and social groups, including images broadcast via the mass media
- active promotion through manipulative techniques of a “friend-foe” attitude, development of an “enemy” image, use of antagonistic language in the

mass media, and creation of radical “sites of hate” on the Internet, all having as a main target teenagers and those in the population who feel themselves socially deprived

Social-monitoring results demonstrate that the mass media and the sphere of family life compete with one another in manifestations of intolerance. According to polling data, the education sphere is considered to be the one displaying intolerance the least (Soldatova & Filileeva, 2006). Thus, we can conclude that societal expectations in regard to education as a socialization institution capable of offsetting the defects of socialization in the family, mass media, and “the street” have a real basis.

Besides these data, worthy of special attention are the investigations of social stereotypes formed by the mass media and also the values of teenagers and of eyewitnesses and participants in various kinds of traumatic situations. These data prove that the perception of acts of cruelty, xenophobia, ethnophobia, and migrantophobia as social norms is emerging in modern Russian society.

These perceptions are manifest mostly in social groups that are in the limelight of heightened social attention (teenagers, migrants, national minorities). Thus, in a study of the state of tolerance in teenager subculture, the teenagers answered a question about the attitude that was most widespread in modern Russia toward national, ethnic, religious, and lingual minorities by putting aggressive nationalism in first place (18.6%), then racism (17.1%), discrimination (16.4%), violence (14.7%), intolerance (14.4%), terrorism (13.4%). Only about 2% of the teenagers thought that none of the listed phenomena was common in relation to minorities. Also high is the percentage of schoolchildren who were indifferent to this problem (28.2%). Moreover, more than a third of respondent teenagers were indifferent to any informal youth groups, including skinheads (Abrosimova, Adamchuk, Baranova, Vaganova, Gluhova, Evstigneeva, Kurlenko, Marich, Muterperel, Pisarskiy, Ravlyuk, Sobkin, Tkachenko, Fedotova, Fedyunina, 2003, p. 25).

The indifference of a substantial number of teenagers to socially dangerous acts of violence and extremism as a social norm is strong proof of the necessity for mandating as a state policy the use of education as the institution for creating civil identity, social harmony, and tolerance in Russian society.

These facts indicate that education is able to act as one of leading institutions in creating tolerance and preventing xenophobic attitudes. At the same time, general education has extremely low effectiveness as a resource for creating tolerance in children and teenagers. Moreover, school textbooks that present the story of humankind’s development as a history of violence and wars in many ways encourage the attitude that settling conflicts by violence is a social norm. Consequently, it is necessary to include in textbooks factual material demonstrating the role of collaboration, cooperation, mutual understanding, religious freedom, peacefulness, and dialogue in developing various cultures.

On the whole, in the context of developing a sociocultural strategy for reforming education with the goal of reducing social strain and overcoming negative social attitudes among teenagers and young people, I propose the enhancement, within the education system, of programs revealing the positive values of various religions and national cultures in the history of civilizations and multinational modern society.

With the help of specially developed sociopsychological techniques for tolerance formation, in the process of training in tolerance and social competence, teachers, instructors, and students can learn to settle conflict situations, conduct negotiations, take the positions of conflicting parties, and see the world through the eyes of someone else. Tolerance is by no means the absence of one's own position or indifference to various forms of religious and national intolerance. On the contrary, only people having their own outlook and creed are capable of being generous, respecting the outlook and creed of others, and possessing civil, ethnocultural, and panhuman identity.

Tasks in the sociocultural remodeling of education

The above analysis allows us to pinpoint the major tasks in the sociocultural remodeling of education without which risks in the process of social development of the country will only grow.

The first task is to identify the projects that reveal the essence of education as a leading social activity and to implement these projects at various educational levels. The focus of these target programs is the educational space as a social network including other socialization institutions (the family, the mass media, religion, socioeconomic institutions). The aim is to determine the social effects of education as it interacts with these institutions in the life of a person, the society, and the state. Currently, despite the movement toward a knowledge-based society outlined in state policy, the connection of education to social effects and to the mental development of the Russian population is very poorly represented in mass consciousness. Hence, public understanding of the strategy for the sociocultural remodeling of education and of ways it can be implemented can become one of the factors motivating a change in the social attitudes of the population in favor of education.

The second task is the formation of civil identity as a precondition for strengthening the society as a unity of diversity and solidarity in the sphere of the social and interpersonal relations of Russian citizens. Unless this task is carried out, the crisis of identity observed in different regions and national republics will grow, while giving rise to political and social risks on the path of the country's development.

The third task is designing programs—in the first place, preschool and school programs—that provide for the creation of social-tolerance norms and trust as a condition for a dialogue of cultures in multinational Russian society. This task is directly connected to the task of forming civil identity.

The fourth task is offsetting the potential risks of the oncoming generations' socialization being carried out exclusively in other socialization institutions. This task includes creating social partnerships with the mass media, religion, and the family to promote the successful socialization of children, teenagers, and young people and the use of social networks among these institutions to reduce the risk of social conflicts and strain.

The fifth task is upgrading the quality and accessibility of education as a resource for personal social growth in modern society; achieving professional and personal success awakens belief in oneself and in the future of one's country. This task is directly connected to the strata-forming function of education; it also allows

reduction in the risks of social segregation, which to a great extent is a result of low social mobility and low accessibility of a quality education.

The sixth task is developing “competence in the reform of competences” as a value objective at various educational levels so that oncoming generations can cope with manifold professional and other problems during a period of a steep growth in information flows and an increased tempo of social changes.

And, finally, the seventh task is developing general education standards as conventional social norms that ensure a balance of the interests of the family, society, state, and school with regard to providing quality education and allowing embodiment of the vital strivings of youth.

These are the priority tasks for the sociocultural remodeling of education in general. In order for this strategy to provide a hypothesis-generating atmosphere and new education-development programs, it is necessary that critical work be done, work that, in the words of Michel Foucault, “also implies belief in the Enlightenment and... always calls for the necessity to work on our practices, i.e.. patient labor shaping the impatience of freedom” (2002, p. 357).

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