

# Goals and objectives of civic education in Russia and in the USA: the comparative analysis

Metas y objetivos de la educación cívica en Rusia y en Estados Unidos: Un análisis comparativo

Inna S. BESSARABOVA 1; Tatiana N. BOKOVA 2; Lubov A. RYCHENKOVA 3

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#### **ABSTRACT:**

The urgency of the topic is stipulated by the importance of the problem of civic education of youth in modern multicultural society and the world, where respect of human rights and freedoms, development of civic consciousness are the leading directions of educational policy. The purpose of the research is to reveal and characterize general and peculiar approaches towards the formulation of the goals and objectives of civic education in Russia and in the USA using the methods of theoretical and comparative analysis of scientific literature on the problem. The formulation of the goals of civic education in Russia and the United States has different accents, which are manifested in the understanding of the active citizenship of the student: in Russia it is characterized by willingness to participate in the life of the school, district and society; in the United States the focus is made on the student's skills to identify and eliminate any form of discrimination in school and society. Setting goals for civic education also has different priorities in these countries. In Russia it is the desire to form a national educational ideal, which gives the objectives a somewhat declarative character. In the United States it is the formation of more mature and socially independent citizens capable of achieving social justice in the society. The results of the

#### **RESUMEN:**

La urgencia del tema está estipulada por la importancia del problema de la educación cívica de los jóvenes en la sociedad multicultural moderna y el mundo, donde el respeto de los derechos humanos y las libertades, el desarrollo de la conciencia cívica son las direcciones principales de la política educativa. El propósito de la investigación es revelar y caracterizar enfoques generales y peculiares para la formulación de las metas y objetivos de la educación cívica en Rusia y en los EE. UU. Utilizando los métodos de análisis teórico y comparativo de la literatura científica sobre el problema. La formulación de los objetivos de la educación cívica en Rusia y los Estados Unidos tiene diferentes acentos, que se manifiestan en la comprensión de la ciudadanía activa del estudiante: en Rusia se caracteriza por la voluntad de participar en la vida de la escuela, distrito y sociedad; en los Estados Unidos se hace hincapié en las habilidades del alumno para identificar y eliminar cualquier forma de discriminación en la escuela y la sociedad. Establecer metas para la educación cívica también tiene diferentes prioridades en estos países. En Rusia, es el deseo de formar un ideal educativo nacional, que otorga a los objetivos un carácter algo declarativo. En los Estados Unidos es la formación de ciudadanos más maduros y socialmente independientes capaces de

research are applicable in the process of working out of the new technologies, methods and approaches in education to modernize the programs of civic education and create democratic educational environment in educational institution to develop civic consciousness as an essential personal quality of a student's personality. **Keywords:** civic education; ideal citizen; national educational ideal; civic competence of a person;

educational ideal; civic competence of a person; active civic position; goals and objectives of civic education. lograr la justicia social en la sociedad. Los resultados de la investigación son aplicables en el proceso de elaboración de las nuevas tecnologías, métodos y enfoques en educación para modernizar los programas de educación cívica y crear un ambiente educativo democrático en la institución educativa para desarrollar la conciencia cívica como una cualidad personal esencial del estudiante. personalidad. **Palabras clave:** educación cívica; ciudadano ideal; ideal educativo nacional; competencia cívica de una persona; posición cívica activa; metas y objetivos de la educación cívica.

## **1. Introduction**

Turning to the current state of civic education in Russia, it should be emphasized that the beginning of XXI century is the time of formation of civil society and rule-of-the-law state, the time of the transition to market economy, recognition of man, his rights and freedoms as the highest value.

Changes in society are placing new demands on the education system, among which the focus is put on self-realization and socialization of student's personality in society, the ability to adapt in the labour market and the readiness for life in modern multicultural society (Vul'fson 2008). Strengthening the educational function of education demands from students the formation of such qualities as citizenship, patriotism, responsibility, diligence, morality, love to the family and Motherland, careful attitude to the natural environment.

In our study we appeal to the experience of civic education in the United States. We believe that the study of the experience of civic education in the USA will be useful for the Russian theory and practice in this area for a number of reasons. The USA, as well as Russia, is a multicultural country, which actualizes the issue of education of representatives of different nationalities and cultures as citizens of a single state. Educational experience of the USA as the homeland of large numbers of immigrants is important to the fact that earlier it was the territory of residence of disparate immigrants, which required a special approach to solving the problems of education. The history of the formation of civic education in the United States has more than two centuries and is inextricably linked to historical and political life of the society. The researchers relate its beginning with the proclamation of independence of the USA in 1783 and the adoption of the US Constitution in 1787. These historical events have highlighted the problem of the constructing of a new state, consolidation of people as one nation and educating active citizens of a new country. It should be emphasized the importance of the emergence of the Constitution of the United States as the world's first written Constitution, which influenced the Constitution of many countries, including Russia. This document can be a separate subject of study for various professionals. It is crucial for our study that the U.S. Constitution for the first time strengthened the basis of the legal and democratic state, which affected the goals and objectives of the education of the citizen of the country.

Few scientists in Russia dedicated their researches to the problem of civic education in the USA: the problems of moral-civic education of students in the United States and Russia (Ziyatdinova 2002, Kovaleva 2003, Jacobson 1997); civic education of students in secondary school of the USA (Fahrutdinova 2001); the contents and methods of civic education of youth in the USA (Rogova 2005); the political culture of the youth of the United States (Pivneva 1994); civic education of students in English-speaking countries (Fahrutdinova 2012).

The fundamental difference of our approach to the study of civic education in the United States is that we consider this problem in a *multicultural context*.

To show the close relationship of civic education and multicultural education is necessary as the latter has ensured access to education for all citizens of the United States and was a powerful stimulus for the development of civic education in the late XX – early XXI centuries. In the US scientific literature the theory and practice of civic education of students is largely based on the works of researchers studying the contemporary issues of multicultural education: B. Biglow, B. Petersen, K. Bereiter, S. Ingelman, S. Boll, W. Brookover, J. Banks, K. Bennett, W. Blassingame, M. Gibson, D. Gollnick, F. Chinn, K. Grant, J. Gay, L. Delpit, R. Daniels, E. Cohen, P. Limerick, G. Ladson-Billings, S. Nieto, B. Sizemore, K. Sleeter, D. Helling, and others.

The purpose of this article is to study the approaches of Russian and American scientists to determine the goals and objectives of civic education to identify national priorities in the education of youth in Russia and the United States.

## 2. Methods

The fundamental theoretical works of the American and Russian scientists on the issues of civic education and multicultural education have served as the main sources of the problem. Generally during the study, the methods of theoretical analysis of scientific literature on the problem were used as well as the translation, synthesis of foreign scientific writings to identify the main provisions of this research.

This study consisted of several stages, each one required specific research methods. At the first stage, the methods of historical and logical analysis, retrospective analysis of the problem of civic education in Russia and the United States; content analysis of the legal framework of Russia and the United States in the field of education were used to justify the relevance of the research topic.

The second stage demanded mainly theoretical and comparative analysis of the concepts of civic education of Russian and American scientists to identify their approaches to the definition of "civic education", as well as to the formulation of goals, objectives and requirements for the development of the content and principles of civic education; theoretical analysis of the concepts of multicultural education in the United States to determine the multicultural foundations of civic education in the United States.

At the third stage, the main methods were the systematization and generalization of theoretical and practical experience of Russia and the United States in the field of civic education to identify its general and special characteristics in terms of goals, objectives, content and principles.

# 3. Findings

The results of the research showed that in the analyzed conceptions of the Russian scientists towards formulation of goals and objectives of civic education the urgency of the patriotism development, law knowledge and political awareness, responsible participation in social life are revealed.

It should be pointed out that similar ideas exist in the American conceptions. In our opinion, closer relation of civic education to patriotic and law education is specific for Russia, while American authors underline multicultural character of civic education. Different approaches to understanding the "active civic position of a student" are revealed. Russian scientists mean only readiness of a student to responsible and competent participation in the life of a school, district and society. American theorists complement "the active civic position of a student" with the student's skill to resist to any form of discrimination at school as well as out of it.

To meet the goals of civic education American scientists point out the importance of creation of the democratic atmosphere at school; school cooperation with social organizations; development of critical assessment of information; law knowledge and political activity; cooperation of school and church in the process of moral and civic education of a child.

## 4. Discussion

Currently, civic education in Russia is at the stage of its formation, which includes the development of its goals, objectives and content, the formation of the democratic values in the work of educational institutions and organization of social practice of students. Analysis

of scientific literature by Russian and American scientists on the issues of civic education allows to compare the approaches of the researchers of the two countries to the formulation of goals and objectives of civic education. This view of the problem will help to identify the main national priorities in the education of youth in Russia and the United States.

The main *goal* of education in Russia is upbringing, socio-pedagogical support of formation and development of a moral, responsible, creative, proactive, competent citizen of Russia for life in a democratic state, civil society. Such citizen should have a certain amount of knowledge and skills, the generated system of democratic values, and willingness to participate in the socio-political life of the school, and local communities.

Modern national educational ideal is defined in Russia as a highly moral, creative, competent citizen who accepts the fate of the Motherland as their personal, who is conscious of the responsibility for the present and the future of their country, which are rooted in the spiritual and cultural traditions of the multinational people of Russia (Danyluk et al. 2010).

V. A. Gladik in determining the goals of civic education focuses on the formation of civic competence of personality, which is understood as the totality of readiness and abilities which allows a person implement actively, responsibly and effectively the whole complex of civil rights and obligations in civil society (Gladik 2010).

N. F. Krickaâ demonstrates a more detailed approach to defining the goals of civic education and believes that it has three groups of targets, denoted by the concepts of "political culture", "legal culture" and "culture of interethnic relations". In the first case we are talking about the student's knowledge of politics, political system, organs of government, loyalty to the political organization of society, the ability to participate in the political life of the country. The second case assumes the presence of such qualities and knowledge, as a conscious discipline, law, and intolerance of offences, knowledge of the fundamental laws of society and the state, the idea of law, civil and human rights of the child. It is especially important to raise a law-abiding citizen – a person who respects the law and desires to observe it. The third case assumes the need to develop knowledge of the history, culture and art of his homeland; the love of his people and active participation in the preservation and development of national culture; knowledge of other cultures of his country and of other countries, respectful attitude; ability to build relationships with representatives of other cultures and peoples on the principles of mutual respect and tolerance (Krickaâ 2005).

The analysis of approaches of Russian scientists to the goals of civic education has shown that a number of researchers emphasize the patriotic component in the organization of work with students.

So, N. Ivanov says that the goal of civic education is to educate the students to love their historical homeland, so – to educate patriotic feelings in general - the formation of value systems that provide the formation of citizenship and patriotism (Ivanov 1999).

G. Y. Grevtseva assumes that the main goal of civic education in working with students is the development of students' civic consciousness and patriotism, i.e. the formation of critical, moral and social values, significant qualities, abilities and readiness for their active manifestation in personal spheres of life. Citizenship is understood by the author as harmonic combination of patriotic and international feelings, moral and legal culture, manifested in self-esteem, inner discipline, respect and trust in other citizens and to the state (Grevtseva 2005).

When defining the goals of civic education American scientists emphasize different aspects, but are united in the opinion that school is designed to educate the *ideal citizen*, who understands and accepts democratic values, is a patriot of his country, respects and observes the law, knows and performs his civic duties, knows the structure of the political power, takes part in social activities for the benefit of the community, the state and the country as a whole, respects cultural diversity, is able to resist discrimination in any form of manifestation, is sensitive to national and world richness and diversity of the country and the world.

M. Apple and J. Beane determine the main goal of civic education as the readiness and willingness of youth to life in a multicultural society and the world, and active participation in

public and political life of their country (Apple and Beane 2011).

A. Colby believes that the purpose of civic education in school is a conscious acceptance by every student of the moral, social and cultural values and the formation of commitment to act according to these values as part of their responsibilities and rights as a member of the school community and democratic multicultural society (Colby 2013).

P. Freire stresses that the education of a worthy citizen of his country is aimed primarily at the formation of such personal qualities as responsibility, self-discipline, respect for the person as the highest value, respect for government, respect for law, critical evaluation of information, economic, political and legal literacy, the ability to recognize discriminatory practices and resist them actively (Freire 2014).

According to W. Parker, the main aim of the school is to teach children to think critically, to develop curiosity and confidence, to form ability to acquire knowledge and make decisions independently. This requires equal opportunities in getting qualitative education by the children of different ethnic and cultural background, of psychophysical development, of different social status (Parker 2013).

As stressed by J. Banks, at the present stage the state authorities in the United States put in front of their schools the following objectives: the education of a responsible citizen, help in professional self-determination, recognition of the value of self, the respect for the personality of another person, patriotism, respect for law and government (Banks 2014).

Despite the different wording of the goals of civic education of American scientists, we can distinguish three groups of goals: active citizenship of a citizen; recognition of the value of the human person regardless of identity; strengthening of the moral personality.

Civic education in Russia provides the solution to the following *objectives*. Many Russian scientists pay attention to the importance of creating democratic environment at school. The main parameters of this atmosphere are:

- the idea of the priority of individual rights;

- the democratization of school management, particularly the strengthening of its pedagogical potential; participation of all members of the school community in school management, creating of the opportunities for civic activity of students not only in educational process but also outside it (Gladik 2010);

- creation of school environment of mutual respect, mutual responsibility of all participants of educational process, constructive communication and dialogue; harmonization of interests of groups of participants of school life, including parents and community; free and open discussion of the problems (Kuznecova 2005);

- creation of school environment of self-improvement and renewal; legal area; the development of school self-government, simulation of democratic institutions (Krickaâ 2005).

The team of authors under L. N. Bogolyubov gives a detailed interpretation of the task and defines the following directions of work with students:

-the definition of ideals and values, the meaning of life, value attitude to their own lives. The authors of the concept believe that human values are a system-forming factor of education of each student. Humanitarian knowledge as the totality of all knowledge about human constitutes the most important source of citizenship training;

- education of valuable attitude to the native national culture through the study of the contribution of Russian figures of science, culture and art to the world values;

- education of the requirement in the creative conscious of the work as the expression of human entity;

-education of health-creative culture, expressed in the value attitude towards their health and desire in the future to create a healthy family (Bogolyubov et al. 2003).

According to I. V. Molodtsova, task group on civic education of students should include the formation of the following qualities: the rejection of anti-social norms of behaviour (legal awareness); patriotic feelings and consciousness of the students; environmental culture as a

guarantee of preservation of the environment; active citizenship through participation in school government (Molodtsova 2007).

O. V. Sirotkin formulates general and specific objectives of civic education. General tasks include: formation of students' civil responsibility and legal consciousness, spirituality and culture, initiative and independence, tolerance, and social abilities in the society and active adaptation in the labour market. Specific tasks, according to the author, should be: knowing of the museums and libraries of the city and the country, the formation of patriotic feelings and civic consciousness based on historical values (Sirotkin 2004).

I. I. Bondarev believes that the objectives of civic education in secondary school should be carried out in three stages. In the first stage the basic moral values, norms of behavior are developed, the formation of the child's ability to recognize themselves as part of society and a citizen of the Motherland begins. In the second stage the knowledge and skills necessary for future independent life of the citizen in a society are acquired. The formation of respect for law and government, responsible behavior before society are emphasized. In the third stage the knowledge about the processes occurring in various spheres of society and on the rights of the people are extended, citizenship of the student is secured. The objective of this stage is that during social activities the students learn how to perform their civic duties to protect their rights and the rights of others (Bondareva 2004).

Let us consider the *objectives* of civic education in the United States. As a priority at the present stage the objective of preparing conscious and responsible voter and citizen is dealt with. At the level of school education it means the shift of emphasis from teaching knowledge and rules to development of their behavior skills characteristic of the member of the democratic and legal society. Since the major part of civic development of the student occurs at school, many authors draw attention to the importance of establishing the school atmosphere which is favorable to the educational process.

One of the main objectives of guaranteeing the successful achievement of the goals of civic education, according to L. Cary, is the creation of the democratic environment at school, which to the extent possible and in accordance with the level of development of students, provides independent action and responsibility (Cary 2011).

J. Kogan draws attention to the creation of atmosphere of trust and reflection on the part of students and teachers. Constant stimulation and motivation of learning, both for the individual and for others, respect and concern for others, the skills of observation, collaboration, critical analysis, dialogue – all these, according to the author, contributes to proactive, constructive thinking (Cogan 2011).

It is important to go beyond the walls of the school, and to work closely with social institutions (social institutions, non-profit foundations, charitable organizations, army, Church) that are actively interacting with schools, promote moral and civic education (Colby 2013).

In today's information society it is important to teach students to think critically, to navigate the large flow of information properly, not allowing false stereotypes turn into prejudice. With the ability to think critically P. Freire associates the opportunity to educate "a free citizen". Civil freedom acquires a special meaning in the information society. At all times people dreamed of freedom, but a minimum of knowledge prevented its implementation. Today the situation has changed. The more information you have, the freer a person becomes in the selection of actions. The author stresses that it is important to teach children to be guided by conscience in the choice of action. Because the most dangerous result of education is well informed citizens who are not burdened by conscience (Freire 2014).

A number of teachers believe that during the period of study in school students should be given the opportunity to feel not only students, but also members of society. They should be encouraged to participate in the affairs of the society, of which they are members (Gordon et al. 2013). As stressed by A. Gordon, the school must educate the children to be responsive to another, to have desire to help those in need, thereby suggesting to young people that they are needed by society. The school should help children to go out of isolation and establish contacts with the local community, the elderly, the sick, the poor and homeless people, to acquaint them with the problems of the neighbor and to help. It is necessary to educate a child to perform naturally the needed voluntary work in school and outside of it. This will contribute to the unity of the school community and its overall goals and will help all students to understand that to become a real citizen, you should be able to serve not only personal interests.

In our opinion, volunteering is a very important part of citizenship training. This allows the student to see a truly multicultural composition of the society in which he lives, and to understand the difference between the ideal and reality, there should be a desire to make society and the world a better place.

As W. Parker stresses, the school should create such conditions for the formation of future citizens which would take them beyond the school and provide with opportunities to compare the ideals and realities, and then consciously and actively involve the students in the transformation of the world which is not ideal (Parker 2013).

J. Banks also indicates the problem of introducing students to community activities. According to the author, reality, providing children a rich and accurate information about the diversity of the social world, is a necessary condition for education of a critical attitude to prejudice and discrimination existing in society. Discriminatory action is one form of the aggressive behavior, as harmful as physical aggression, and they need to be able to respond to it immediately and efficiently (Banks 2014).

The objective of going beyond the school walls to the community is emphasized by B. Barber: "Each community should be a place for genuine learning. Particularly significant may be its role in the revival of the system of American values, including strong family, responsibility of parents for their children, duties towards others" (Barber 2013). Each school will ensure not only the academic preparation of the students, but also educating them in civic responsibility for their actions.

The American citizen is confident that his opinion should be taken into account when making any important political decisions in the country, therefore, an important task is to educate students as active participants in the political process. Although the core democratic institutions are elections, campaigns and voting, citizens should know that, in addition, there is a wide range of opportunities available to them. For example, high school students work as assistant deputies during internship in local government. Students with distinguished leadership qualities are provided further training in the summer "leadership camps", where they are taught the basics of management (Ravitch and Viteritti 2012).

An important objective of citizenship training is introducing students to the laws of the state, understanding of the necessity of their implementation, formation of civil liability. This task contributes to the development of the active conscious civil action (Lisman 2012).

The current objective is the cooperation of schools and churches. Religion occupies its place in the moral-civic education of the Americans (Gordon et al. 2013). Traditionally, the basic moral concepts of American children are learned at preschool age in the family. At this age children attend Sunday school at the Church, where classes also contribute to strong absorption of basic moral values. In the USA religion is considered a powerful educational tool, which can completely change the child's behavior (Bessarabova and Semisotnova 2013). That is why schools often turn for help to various religious organizations to work with children of "risk group". For example, thanks to the work of the Association of young Christians, many teenagers returned to the family and school, staying away from drugs. Members of the Association conducted with adolescents' discussions, taking into account psychological peculiarities of this age, they also introduced children to community work, sports, showing the children absolutely other side of life (Gordon et al. 2013).

## **5.** Conclusion

In general, the concepts of American and Russian scientists contain many common views on the wording of the goals and objectives of civic education, among which we mention: development of students' responsibility, civic engagement, the pursuit to self-realization; the formation of a sense of civic duty; tolerance education; approval of patriotic values, attitudes and beliefs, respect for cultural and historical past of the country in the minds and feelings of students; the formation of the healthy lifestyle, readiness for military service; formation of active life position, readiness to participate in public and political life of the country; the consolidation of the activities of the school, family and community.

In our opinion, the peculiarity of American concepts of civic education is a mandatory focus on achieving social justice in society that provides for appropriate training of students (the ability to recognize discriminatory actions and resist them actively; to interact with representatives of all sectors of the American society in the period of volunteer work). This approach demonstrates the multicultural focus of civic education (reflects the real picture of American society and prescribes the necessary knowledge, skills and behavior skills that contribute to the mature and independent social relations of its citizens. The study of the American experience also allows you to highlight the educational function of the religion in the system of prevention of deviant behavior of youth.

The peculiarity of the Russian concepts of civic education is the degree of idealization of Russian civil society (in the studied concepts there is no such thing as discrimination in society, poverty, drug and alcohol abuse in schools, etc.), which makes the goals of civic education somewhat declarative in nature and may initially create misconceptions about the society in which young people live. We emphasize that discrimination is one of the main obstacles to democracy. One of its manifestations is the incitement of hatred on a national basis – an actual problem of modern Russia. The educational role of public benefit labor is also underestimated, which is traditionally compulsory in Russian schools and is often limited to the cleaning of adjoining territory.

In this article we made an attempt of comparison of Russian and American conceptions of civic education in the terms of goal and objective characteristics. Despite the fact that the educators from the two countries sometimes put different emphases in the educational guidelines, the general idea is that the progress of any society depends on the citizenship of a person, his priorities in life, moral values, by which he is guided in his actions. We emphasize that the appeal to foreign experience is important not for mechanical drawing of techniques, but, above all, to identify the most valuable elements of the experience that will stimulate the process of cultural mutual enrichment of different scientific schools, which in spite of their differences affect the development of the world science in general.

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<sup>1.</sup> Volgograd State Social-Pedagogical University, Russia, 400066, Volgograd, V. I. Lenin avenue, 27. E-mail: inna\_s\_bessarabova@mail.ru

<sup>2.</sup> Volgograd State Social-Pedagogical University, Russia, 400066, Volgograd, V. I. Lenin avenue, 27

<sup>3.</sup> Volgograd State Social-Pedagogical University, Russia, 400066, Volgograd, V. I. Lenin avenue, 27

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