



A new approach to teaching “The World Around Us”
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ABSTRACT

The importance of folk pedagogy in children upbringing is undeniable, but still it is not used widely. The innovative methods of teaching “The World Around Us” to primary school children, based on the knowledge about nature accumulated by the Tatar people, are presented in this article. The Tatar people have developed their own cognition dialectic of nature and communication with it, their own system of familiarizing the youth with a careful attitude to the environment. It is very important not to lose it. Modern education will benefit of using folk knowledge and traditions. It helps to build national identification of students, to enrich their spiritual life, to form their ecological culture, to form the right attitude to nature. The pedagogical experience, traditions, rites and customs of the Tatar people about nature can be the foundation for the students’ ecological culture formation at the lessons of “The World Around Us”. Therefore, we propose to use some innovative methods of teaching “The World Around Us” in primary schools.

Key words: Tatar people, folk pedagogy, traditions, customs, ecological culture



1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of folk pedagogy in children upbringing is undeniable, but still it is not used widely. Knowledge accumulated by earlier generations, folk traditions, customs, rituals, songs, tales are a valuable tool for children education, for formation their ecological culture.

The problem of environmental education is of great interest among scientists from different countries. Numerous articles devoted to this problem can be found in Russian and foreign journals. Ones of the most interesting and useful, from our point of view, are the articles where authors thought about changing learners' behavior through environmental education (Harold R. Hungerford & Trudi L. Volk, 2013), (McGuire, N.M., 2015), (Nurit Carmi, Sara Arnon, and Nir Orion, 2015). Some models and theoretical frameworks on environmental education in the primary schools are presented in the articles of (Amy Cutter-Mackenzie & Susan Edwards, 2013), (Mohammad Reza Karamipour and Sajjad Emamvirdi, 2016), (Wyner, Y., 2013). Other scientists raise equally important problems of students' environmental competence formation as a pedagogical problem (Ponomarenko, Y.V., Yessaliev, A.A., Kenzhebekova, R.I., Moldabek, K., Larchekova, L.A., Dairbekov, S.S. & Asambaeva, A.L., 2016), of navigating environmental attitudes (Matt Ferkany, Allison L. Freed & Sarah Riggs Stapleton, 2014), of environmental identity development through social interactions, action, and recognition (Sarah Riggs Stapleton, 2015), of ecological culture education of school children on the basis of ethnopedagogy (Khusainov Z.A, Shigapova N.V, Samigullina G.S., 2016), (Khusainov Z.A. Gaisin R.I., Biktimirov N.M., Valiev M.R., Gilemhanov I.R., 2015), of family upbringing children in the substrate of folk ecological traditions (Z.A. Khusainov, I.T. Gaisin , S.I. Beketova, M.R. Valiev and Z.E. Minnebaeva, 2016), of the research on the formation of schoolchildren's environmental culture (Zaudet Abdullovish Khusainov, Shamil Shagitovich Galimov and Leysan Ismagilovna Abinova, 2015), of education for the environment (Robottom, I.M., 2014), of the history of the development of ecological culture of the Tatar people (Khusainov Z.A., 2015) etc.

2. METHOD



The Tatar people have developed their own cognition dialectic of nature and communication with it, their own system of familiarizing the youth with a careful attitude to the environment. However, at certain stages of the development of the society, unfortunately, there was a forgetfulness of the established traditions, rituals and customs, a departure from them, which led to well-known consequences. For this reason it is necessary to revive and strengthen the old and good traditions of the people and try to build a positive attitude towards the nature on this foundation.

The child perceives the native word, the musical rhythm from adults. Lullabies, rhymes, folk songs, national holidays, traditions are passed on from generation to generation as part of the spiritual culture of the people. That’s why it is very important not to lose them. Modern education will benefit of using folk knowledge and traditions. It helps to build national identification of students, to enrich their spiritual life, to form their ecological culture, to form the right attitude to nature, to change their environmental behaviour through proper education. Therefore, we propose to use some innovative methods of teaching “The World Around Us” in primary schools.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In old times, in their rituals, people turned directly to nature, asked for her mercy, abundant rain and it is reflected in folk songs and verses.

The Tatar people have funny four-line rhymed folk songs – “takmaklar”, where environmental assets and motives often sound. For example, such imitative songs and “takmaklar” can be used at the lessons of “The World Around Us” (Table 1)

Table 1. Examples of imitative songs and “takmaklar”

Topic of the lesson	Imitative songs and “takmaklar” about animals and birds
Life of birds and animals in winter	“Running on the cold snow, A hare has his paws frozen, Gnawing a frozen bark, His teeth get blunted”
Life of birds and animals in spring	The rooster on the hedge, Crows: "Ku-ka-re-ku I received a calling-up notice



	To serve in the army.”
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A great role in the spiritual development of children is played by a fairy tale. Its educational value is undeniable. The idea of a fairy tale - the fight against evil, a good attitude towards the nature, overcoming one's own shortcomings - is close and understandable for children.

The main characters of Tatar folk tales are often wild and domestic animals. Especially popular fairy tales are “Salam Torhan and the fox”, “The old man, the bear and the fox”, “The naked wolf”, “The fox and the crane”, “The goat and the sheep”, etc. Fragments of these fairy tales can be also used in teaching the “The World Around Us” in the second and third grades. Fox, bear and wolf are the most popular characters in this type of fairy tales, other wild animals and birds are less common. Human shortcomings are allegorically depicted in fairy tales about animals. In these cases, animal habits are used to expose human vices.

Tatar folk tales glorify and reflect the beauty of the nature of our region. For example, individual stories can be used from folk tales like “The White Wolf” (Ak Bure) which says, "After leaving my forest, in three days and three nights you will reach the kingdom, departing from this kingdom, three days and three nights later, you will find a golden, thick poplar, beneath which there is a small blue lake. "

Hence, the Tatar folk fairy tales from ancient times were one of the ways to educate the younger generations, instilled a love for nature, contributed to the formation of their ecological culture and the fragments from these tales can be used at the lessons of the “The World Around Us”.

Educating children to be spiritually rich, physically healthy, ecological and moral is facilitated by games. Children's games are a reflection of life and work of the adult population. Our ancestors used games reflecting the components of nature, for example: “Cat and mouse”, "Bear and wolf", “Geese-swans”, “Flowers, bushes, trees”, etc., in the education and upbringing of children. The creative abilities of children are fully revealed in such environmental games. The game always has a spirit of ease and relaxedness, due to which a large number of children, sometimes imperceptibly, are involved in the process of environmental education; it helps them to develop positive moral and ethical qualities.



The Tatar people paid great attention to observations, and developed children's observation as a quality of personality from an early age. For this reason, puzzles (“tabyshmaklar”), reflecting a purposeful observation of the natural manifestations of nature, were used. For example, in the lessons of the "World Around Us" while studying the themes “The Universe, Time, Calendar” “Spring and Summer”, such riddles can be used: “A half teaspoon is over the coverlet” (moon); “A yellow sunflower is above the houses” (sun); “It's not my dog, but it follows me” (shadow) ; “Without wings, but flies” (wind); “The cow's udder is full, it's time to milk” (rain cloud). The pedagogical value of riddles is in the fact that they develop the thinking of children; stimulate their interest to the components and phenomena of nature, help shaping the students' ecological culture. Folk pedagogy, taking into account the peculiarities of children's psychology and the educational value of riddles, uses them as a didactic material.

The beauty of native environment is sung in many folk songs. Through the lines of their songs, the people transmit the baton of spiritual culture, ecological, moral and aesthetic standards to new generations. Glorifying the beauty of their native land, Tatar folk songs, thereby, help bringing up respect for the environment, love for the Motherland in the souls of children. This is their pedagogical value. Thus, folk songs can also be used at the lessons of the “The World Around Us”.

A characteristic feature of the people's educational system is the continuous accumulation of knowledge about nature, traditions, rituals and customs. The people have preserved certain traditions. They are closely connected with social standards, norms of behavior, ideas, customs, rituals, somehow having ecological value. Therefore, in this study, we consider them as components of the people's ecological culture.

The Tatar people have a lot of holidays. Many of them are related to the nature of the native land (Table 2).



Table 2. Traditional Tatar national holidays

Seasons	Tatar national holidays
Spring	Nauruz (New Year for Turkic nationalities), Karga Botkasy (welcoming rooks' arrival),
Summer	Sabantuy (Plow Festival), Flower Festival, Berry Festival,
Autumn	“Kaz Omese” (feast of plucking geese)

In the second grade, while studying the topic "Spring and summer", the traditions of the peoples of the native land can be used. In the spring, when the white fragrant bird cherry blossomed, young girls, boys and kids gathered in a forest clearing for the "Flower Festival". They did khorovods (dance in a round) and sang funny songs. They not only glorified their native land, but also brought up ecological culture among the youth.

Summer is a wonderful time of the year, especially when the berry ripens in the forest and the Berry Festival begins. The forest is ringing with bird voices, on the sunny clearings, whole scattering of strawberries are peeling out from every bush, and again in the forest there are laughter, games, dances and children's songs. They sit down in a circle and tell each other fairy tales, unusual stories, jokes, fun.

Sabantuy" - "Plow Festival" is, undoubtedly, the most remarkable of all these holidays. Its roots go back to ancient times. People then believed that if you pleased the earth; asked it for favor, it could yield a good harvest. Sabantuy was arranged in the early spring, as soon as the snow melted away. In order that the earth became kind and generous, utensils with porridge, eggs and grain were buried into the ground.

Sabantuy's holiday was of great educational importance. The young generation learned to love their native land, got to know their roots. Since then, centuries have passed, but the holiday is still celebrated in our days. But now it is celebrated in the summer, and customs have become different (shown Figure 1).



Fig.1: Sabantuy's holiday

Another holiday of the Tatar people is “Herald”. In the dialects of the Tatar language, it was called differently: “Red Egg’s Day”, “Kharga Botkasy” (welcoming rooks’ arrival), etc. Early in the morning, before sowing, boys went from house to house, collected eggs, then went out into the countryside, enjoyed themselves and had fun. In ancient times a magical character was attributed to this ritual, the performance of which promised a good harvest of cereals and other crops.

The information received from the older generation of Malaya Tsilna village in the Drozhzhanovsky district of the Republic of Tatarstan is of particular interest.

“Earlier, the festival “Karga Botkasy” (welcoming rooks’ arrival) was held before sowing. The boys gathered and went to the bank of the Tsilna River, brought grains, butter, salt, etc. with them, put everything in a common cauldron and cooked the porridge. When the porridge was ready, they went back to the village and ran through the streets shouting: “Kar, kar, kar” - like rooks and called all the residents for porridge.”

The holiday “Herald” embodies the revitalization of nature, beginning with the arrival of rooks, which seemed to bring with them warm, beautiful days. Therefore, rooks were considered almost as holy birds. Over time these rituals lost their original meaning and turned into entertainment events:

“Rooks say, “kar, kar”,”



Our holiday has come:

Please, do come, come!

Bring cereals, eggs and

Milk; do not forget the butter,

Please, do come, come!”

Through folk rites, children comprehended the secrets of nature and were brought up morally and ecologically, to be ready to ennoble the nature of their native land.

While studying the theme "Autumn" in the first grade of "The World Around Us", such kind of celebration of the Tatars – “Kaz Omese” (feast of plucking geese) can be used (shown Figure 2).



Fig.2: "Kaz Omese"

In the Tatar villages, usually "Kaz Omese" was held in the late autumn. There was a lot of work: you need to pluck and eviscerate the slaughtered poultry. That's why the hosts invited helpers. Young people gathered in the courtyard, on the street, in the meadow, near the house. The work was accompanied by the folk songs, jokes, monajats, baits, etc. At the end of the holiday, the hosts treated the guests with delicious national dishes: goose meat, bialysh, pancakes, and noodle soup. Such holiday left an indelible impression on everybody's soul.



Thus, the folk traditions of upbringing became empirically the main condition for the national culture revival.

4. SUMMARY

Folk traditions, customs and ceremonies brought young people moral and ethical feelings closely linked with the ethno-ecology of the people and human values.

A careful attitude of the people towards the nature, educates the younger generation to be respectful to each other, to their pals and friends.

Having examined the conditions for the ecological culture formation of the second grade children at the lessons of the “The World Around Us” on the basis of the pedagogical experience, traditions, rites and customs of the people, the following conclusions were made:

1. Using materials of people environmental knowledge about the native land at the lessons of the "The World Around Us" in the second grade is a combination of pedagogical and ecological ideas of the ennobling the nature, reflected in folk knowledge, traditions, customs and rituals.
2. The pedagogical experience, traditions, rites and customs of the Tatar people about nature are the foundation for the students' ecological culture formation at the lessons of “The World Around Us”.
3. A caring attitude to nature reflected in the pedagogical ideas of the people is the most important means of educating the younger generation at the lessons of “The World Around Us”.

5. CONCLUSION

The Tatar people have their own spiritual world, their own particular ideal, their traditions, rites and customs. Pedagogical ideas in education were associated precisely with these traditions, rituals, customs, life, work of the people. On the basis of preservation, development and creative assimilation of the spiritual treasures of the native people, an ecological culture of the individual is formed.

The innovative methods of teaching “The World Around Us” that we propose can be used in primary schools of the Republic of Tatarstan and in other regions of the Russian Federation with Tatar population.

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