

Ecological Approach in Pre-School Upbringing

**N.A. Medina Bracamonte,
Ass.Prof. of the Pedagogy and Pedagogical Psychology Dept.,
Saint-Petersburg State University,
Saint-Petersburg, Russia.**

A public, a state-oriented aspect of upbringing, understanding of its ideas and ideological grounds were known already in the ancient Near East, Greece and Rome. It is only among the non-historical nations that “a spirit cannot tear itself away from a nature and elevate above physical needs of its organism” [L. Modzalevsky, Saint-Petersburg, 2000, p.1, p.43].

Years spent in school are utterly important and dominant part of a child's life. The pre-school upbringing contributes mostly to an adaptation to school, good progress there and, later, in future life. Parents and teachers face the challenge of providing the child with competencies he/she will need for a proper adaptation in the society, and, at the same time, keeping it physically and psychically sound. An ecological approach towards comprehensive training seems to be the most appropriate answer.

Concrete programs of comprehensive training, developed in Russian pre-school education, are methodologically based, first of all, on the L.Vygotsky's theory of the mental development, and on the later concepts offered by A.Zaporozhets, L. Bozhovich, D.Elkonin, V.Davydov, L.Venger, N.Poddyakov et al.

Psychology, being the basis of education, has known an “ecological approach” notion since 1960s; initially, it was associated with works by J.Gibson and U.Brofenbrenner.

Gibson opposes “world of ecology”, i.e. everything a human being can see, hear or somehow perceive, and “world of physics” (as described by physics, chemistry etc. sciences). He arrived to a conclusion that any analysis must be treated as the most important variable in the environment conditions. Later, I.Gibson saw that approach as methodologically important for the psychology in general.

U. Brofenbrenner described ecological approach from the point of view offered by social learning theory. This theory views the development of the child's personality in the context of its interaction with the social environment; it monitors an effect the closest social environment (family, first of all) has on the development of the child, position children have in a society, traditions, social and economic situation, values and ideology etc.

Modern science literature of Russia almost never treats ecological approach as a methodology of educational practice. Publications existing see ecological approach to be methodologically

valid mostly for higher education, in particular, for training of teacher psychologists (L.Moiseyeva, 2012). She refers ecological approach to the “steady education” concept being an integration of an environment, an economics, a society, rights and duties of the modern human being (L.Moiseyeva, 2012). The thesis by N.Yegorova “Ecological Culture of the Teacher: Axio-Pedagogical Component” (Tomsk, 2002) justifies ecological component should be made a part of the educational system in the context of eco-cultural approach (S.Glazachev, Ye.Slastenina, V.Kobyliansky).

The review of the scientific literature has shown that “ecological approach” term misses any uniform definition in the educational practice of Russia. Its use in pre-school training has never been considered. However, it has well developed theoretical ground: methodological approaches (culturological and comprehensive inclusive) were properly justified; educational principles adopted in Russia were explained. They include, among others, humanistic education and freedom of choosing an education matching personal capabilities and needs, creating an environment friendly for person’s fulfilment, making teachers free in selecting of forms and methods for education and upbringing.

It is only in the XXI century that ecological approach will perhaps obtain a theoretical support. The humanity is beginning to notice new technologies in industry, agriculture and education prevent natural flow of life – development of living things, cultivation of land, free and normal communication. Now, when all this is being lost, people just start thinking about its value, uniqueness and benefit.

Education, particularly upbringing in early stages of life, may still save traditions of live communication, taking care of the environment, self-development, including its emotional and creative sides, prevailing of cultural and moral values in education.