

## **Multicultural Curricula in University for Nationalities in China—the Survey of Yanbian University**

**Yicao Tan**

PhD in Chinese Literature  
Associate Professor  
College of Liberal Arts  
Yanbian University

**Hongpei Jin**

PhD in History  
Associate Professor  
Liberal Arts, Yanbian University  
Jilin Province  
China. 133002

### **Abstract**

*With the outstanding development of ethnic education in China, the multicultural curricula and bilingual education are becoming more and more important. But the teachers' qualities of multicultural education are deficient. It was indicated that the teachers in Korean primary and middle school agreed the significant part of the multicultural education qualities, but in fact, their knowledge and ability of multicultural education are really weak. Yanbian University is the university with ethnic characteristics in the northeast of China, in which 65% of students are Chinese-Korean. One of the primary goals of Yanbian University is to cultivate the pre-service teachers for the Korean primary and middle schools, so in 2010, the multicultural curricula were put forth in order to train the multicultural educational competence of the pre-service teachers. The goal of multicultural curricula is to cultivate the pre-service teachers' ability of multicultural education.*

**Keywords:** pre-service teachers; multicultural qualities; multicultural curricula

Yanbian University is a minority university for Chinese-Korean which was put up in 1949. Yanbian University is located in Yanbian Chinese-Korean Regional Area in the northeast of China, in which 65% of students are Chinese-Korean and 80% of teachers are Chinese-Korean. One of the primary goals of Yanbian University is to cultivate the pre-service teachers for the Korean primary and middle schools, hence how to cultivate the qualities of multicultural education of the pre-service teachers are becoming the urgent issue for the teacher education program. <sup>1</sup>So in 2010, the multicultural curricula were developed, and the student in the teacher education program must have 15 credits of the multicultural curricula for the teacher certificate.

### ***1. Cognition, Emotion and the Ability of Multicultural Education in Korean Primary and Middle Schools***

It is indicated that the teachers in Korean primary and middle school(s) agreed the significant part of multicultural qualities, but the knowledge and ability of multicultural education are really deficient. The study was performed in the Korean primary and middle schools in Yanbian Chinese-Korean Regional Area in October 2013. The questionnaire was consisted in three dimensions: multicultural education cognition, emotion and the ability. On the questions of the first dimension, such as "Do you agree that a teacher in Korean school should not only understand the Korean culture, but also understand Chinese culture?" There are 60% of teachers agreed completely; 23% of the teachers agreed. The author interviewed some teachers further after the survey, most of the teachers completely committed that the multicultural knowledge is helpful to their teaching in the class. The figures above showed that the teachers saw the importance of teaching Chinese and Korean culture at schools.

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<sup>1</sup> Wang Jian. (2009). Thinking on the problems of ethnic minority education policy. *Studies of Ethnic Education*, 69, 18-25.  
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Along the second dimension, the data showed that 90% of the Korean teachers in the primary and middle school(s) supported the development of the multicultural education. But on the third dimension the survey showed that 98% of the teachers do not know anything about multicultural knowledge and the ability of multicultural education is weak; 93% of teachers answered they don't know how to design and implement the ethnic traditional cultural education in their classes.

## **2. The Implementation of Multicultural Curricula in Yanbian University**

### **2.1 The Goal of Multicultural Curricula is to Cultivate the Pre-Service Teachers' Ability of Multicultural Education**

The goal of the multicultural curricula was determined in 2010 in Yanbian University. According to the goal, firstly, the students should learn knowledge about multicultural in order to understand and appreciate different culture, also they must learn some approaches to examine their prejudice on different culture; thirdly, the students should develop positive attitude towards cultural diversity.<sup>2</sup> We can identify the goals in three aspects as below: (1) knowledge goal, to teach students the development of Chinese-Korean culture, and pick out the characteristics and different ways of thinking because of different cultural background. (2) The practical goal, to train the students to cooperate with people from different cultural background, and teach them how to observe the activities happened in the world from diversity vision. (3) The emotion and attitude, goal, to train the student to respect and appreciate the cultural diversity, and to develop abilities of reflecting on the "stereotypes opinion" in their daily life.<sup>3</sup>

### **2.2 The Principles of Multicultural Curricula are Followed by Nationality, Regional and International**

The principles of multicultural curricula are "national, regional and international". Yanbian Chinese-Korean Regional Area is the collecting and distributing center of commerce, finance and culture, as well as a border city which is located between Russia, North Korea, South Korea and Japan. It is the central area of the economic, demographic and geographic in the Northeast Asia, so the school educational activities are affected by the diverse culture, and the diverse culture, the economic and social development in this region should be reflected in the curricula. Thus the principles of national, regional and international were put forward to construct the multicultural curricula in 2010.

### **2.3. The System to carry Out the Multicultural Curricula is Module Curricula**

Module multicultural curricula were developed in 2010 according to the principle of "national, regional and international". According to the principle three categories were formed: the first category is the cultural cognition courses, such as, *Introduction to Multicultural Education, History and Culture, the Geography History of Yanbian Korean Culture, the Political System in the Northeast Asia, Japan and South Korea culture, South Korea and Chinese Literature course*; The second category is the language courses, the environment of language learning is unique for the students in Yanbian University. Chinese, Korean courses are offered and the third language, normally English or Japanese, was instructed as a foreign language course, such as *multiple language and cultural resources, Misreading in Chinese and English Literature*. The survey showed in 2013 that the students' language knowledge and ability had been strengthened significantly by the language category; The third category is the Korean traditional culture courses, such as, *Borderline Culture Theory, Introduction to Korean Folkloric, Korean, Traditional Food and Health, Culture of Tai Ji and the East Asian Dance, the Korean Traditional Sports and Culture, the Korean Health Management and Research, the Eastern and Western Cultures, etc.* The three categories of multicultural curricula, from 2 to 4 credits, covered the history, geography, customs, sports and music, dance, architecture and language cultural resources. Students must get 15 credits at the three categories.

### **2.4. The Approaches to Implement the Multicultural Curricula are the Additive Approach and the Contributions Approach**

There are several approaches to implement the multicultural curricula, but the most popular approaches were created by James. A. Banks, the key multicultural educator in America.

<sup>2</sup> Chen Meiru. (2008). The concept and practice of multicultural education courses. Taipei Educational Publishing House, (Chapter 7).

<sup>3</sup> Chen Meiru. (2008). The concept and practice of multicultural education courses. Taipei Educational Publishing House, (Chapter 7).

Banks gave 4 approaches to develop the multicultural curricula; they are the contributions approach, additive approach, the transformation approach and the social action approach. <sup>4</sup>According to Professor Banks' theory and the real situation of Yanbian University, the the contributions approach and additive approach were applied to carry out the multicultural curricula.

#### **2.4.1. Additive Approach**

The approach means new courses were developed or additional chapters were put into relative courses. In Yanbian University, there are three principal ways to develop new courses; the first way is the multicultural courses that are posted out in summer semester. At present, in the summer semester (each year in early July to August), there are 21 courses of multicultural curriculum can be selected; the second way is that some courses which related to the major were developed in the spring and fall semester in each college. These classes can be taken as the required and elective. There are 5 multicultural curriculum were developed in the College of Education, such as, *Comparative Study of Chinese and Korean Education*, *Chinese-Korean Educational History*, *Korean History*, *National Educational Theory and the National History in China*. The pupils in the teacher education program must take 6 credits in these classes. The method of cooperative learning is used in these curricula. The skill of listening patiently, ability to cross-cultural communicating can be developed. The knowledge and the skill learned from these courses can help students develop a positive attitude and friendly relationship when they are exposed to the different cultures. The third way is that some lectures that held at the spare time. Experts both inside and outside of China were invited to present lectures on multicultural. 10 or more lectures and seminars are held regularly during each semester. The whole of the multicultural curricula put forward in the form of Module Curricula are carried out in the additive approach.

#### **2. 4.2The Contributions Approach**

the approach means that the knowledge, history and the culture of the ethnic can be shown or taught in some special days. The the contributions approach is also named the hidden curricula which were carried out in various forms. In Yanbian University, according the the contributions approach, multicultural education can be memorized in some special days, such as, 4 May (youth day), 9 December (the day against Japanese aggression), food festival in July, cultural festival in September, film week every month, and so on. The the contributions approach covers the history, traditional artistic production, sports, food, architecture, leisure, amusement activities and the contribution of the Korean. It is helpful for the Students' to develop the national identity, as well as the cross-cultural communicative competences can be strengthened.

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<sup>4</sup> James.A.Banks.(2000).*Multicultural education*. Translated by Pingyi Li. Taipei: National McGraw-hill Press. (Chapter 1).