

# TRAINING MODEL OF SCHOOL INTERCULTURAL MEDIATORS MASTER'S PROGRAM AT SIBERIAN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY

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## **Abstract**

The article investigates the problems of multicultural educational environment and presents a model of intercultural mediators training. The model is based on fundamental theory of mediation in education and multi-ethnic Siberian region peculiarities of migration and intercultural interaction. The structure of the innovative Educational Mediation Master's program at the Siberian Federal University is described. Its modular curriculum design was fostered by the research within the framework and sponsorship of the project powered by the Russian Foundation for Basic Research (RFFR). No 18-013-00528 «The study of mediation practices in the field of education for harmonization of interethnic relations in a multicultural environment»

Keywords: intercultural mediation, intercultural conflict, migration, multicultural environment, Master's program.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Siberia is a multinational region of Russia. 159 nationalities live in Krasnoyarsk region, dominated by representatives of Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan).

Multi-ethnic and multi-confessional Siberian society requires development of intercultural education strategies. I. A. Mishina, M. G. Tsyrenova (2013) noted the need of introducing intercultural education into the learning process of the representatives of different cultures, cultural-historical, ethno-religious, ethnographic, local, religious, ethno-linguistic and other backgrounds. In the education process, different pictures and images of the world, different ethical and religious systems, different forms of identity, cultural and educational interests of the religious and ethnic groups, to which the majority of teachers and students belong, are superimposed. Following C. Bennett (1990), J. Banks (2007), Russian scientist G. D. Dmitriev (1999) defines the goals of multicultural education as: "development of educational policy, the content of education, as well as establishment of psychological and moral climate and relations between all participants of the educational process at all its levels, in which every student, regardless of ethnic origin, age, religious, political, social group, language differences, would have all the necessary opportunities for their intellectual, social and psychological development." In this aspect, new competences of teachers in resolution and prevention of interethnic or inter-religious conflicts in the educational environment through mediation technologies based on intercultural communication are of particular importance.

Through intercultural mediation the perspective of interculturality develops to a much broader field of action, complementing the relational aspect (communication and interaction) with a transformational one. It is this transformation, that arose from the mutual understanding of the involved parts (A. M. Vieira, 2013; R. Vieira & Vieira, 2016), that mediation seeks to accomplish, conducting thus to a deeper level of knowledge of the Other<sup>1</sup>. Intercultural mediation is regarded as a social pedagogy for interculturality that contributes to creating a dialogue between people with different cultural repertoires.

Modern migrant pedagogy, focused on migrant children education, is based on the principles of intercultural (interethnic) communication. Scientific works of E. V. Bondarevskaya, I. V. Babenko, O. S. Gazman, O. V. Gukalenko, N. M. Lebedeva, R. A. Kostin, V. S. Airapetov, L. M. Sukhorukova, etc. claim the necessity of pedagogical support for personal development of migrant children. Migrant pedagogy is aimed at cultural identification of migrant children, their education at the turn of cultures. The most important approach for adaptation and pedagogical support of migrant children in a foreign socio-pedagogical environment is the pedagogy of dialogue which is closely related to the intercultural mediation. Importance of training teachers who possess mediation competence in a multicultural educational environment was noted by the framers of the school mediation idea in Russia: TS. A.

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<sup>1</sup> See Smolyaninova and Trufanov (2018) for an example of the necessity to complement the development of multicultural competencies aimed at promoting the acceptance of the other with measures designed at individual transformation that would allow a deeper knowledge and understanding of the other (that changes the individuals consciousness).

Shamlikashvili, A. Yu. Konovalov, M. A. Khazanova, A. V. Volkov, V. A. Korneeva, A. A. Stepanova, etc. However, in Russia very few universities have mediation in their curricula. The first Master's program Mediation in the Social Sphere was opened at Moscow State University of Psychology and Education (MSUPE), with a focus on children's rights and their support in pre-trial procedures under the supervision of TS. Shamlikashvili. Master's programs were further opened in the Southern and Kazan Federal universities, Novosibirsk State Pedagogical University and a number of others.

However, despite the efforts of a number of universities to deploy a system of Master's programs, in Russia training of mediators is commonly done by refresher courses in licensed educational centers. In addition, until 2018 in Russia there were no Master's programs in Intercultural Mediation for Education. This problem actualizes design of the innovative model of training multicultural mediators in the Master's program of Siberian Federal University described in this article.

Cultural differences cause conflicts and arguments between migrants and the host community, which increase tension in the society. This is certified by the empirical data presented in media (R. Rafikov, D. Trufanov, 2018, O. Smolyaninova, D. Trufanov 2018). Interethnic tension in the educational environment actualizes the challenge of training mediators aimed at development of intercultural dialogue and interethnic relations harmonization.

The relevance of the intercultural mediators training for the Krasnoyarsk region is also confirmed by the Krasnoyarsk Department of Education, in 2016, there were 498 mediation services in the regional and municipal educational organizations, which is more than 42 % of the total number of schools and colleges of the Krasnoyarsk region. According to the statistics of appeals received by the school mediation services of the Krasnoyarsk region, the most popular are conflicts between students (336 appeals in 2015-2016 academic year, 266 appeals in 2016-2017 academic year), conflicts between students and parents (54 appeals in 2015-2016, 36 – in 2016-2017 academic year).

The Krasnoyarsk region figures on mediation in education are insignificant comparing with other regions of Russia. It is particularly disappointing that many of the reconciliation services have zero statistics of mediation and reconciliations procedures. Schools prefer to resolve conflicts by traditional authoritarian methods. This actualizes the need of professional staff to provide school mediation services with the intercultural mediators and the importance of systematic organization work to improve the skills of teachers at the Siberian Federal University.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

For development of the Master's curriculum Mediation in Education at SibFU we used the following methods: theoretical analysis of training mediators for education (refresher courses, retraining, Bachelor's, Master's courses, summer schools); comparative analysis of European models of training intercultural mediators; competence approach, based on academic and professional standards, SWOT – analysis. For the design of mediators training model in the Master's program Mediation in Education of SibFU based on the European best practices and taking into account the regional educational environment specifics, SWOT analysis was done (Table 1).

Table 1. SWOT-analysis of the educational program

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The well-motivated and dedicated staff.</li> <li>2. Reputation as the leading Institution in training innovative teachers for modern schools in the region.</li> <li>3. Well-established Master's programs for teachers.</li> <li>4. Availability of federal and regional regulatory framework in mediation</li> <li>5. Adequate and reliable distance education infrastructure.</li> <li>6. Strong collaboration with the Colleges of Education, secondary schools, Ministry of Education, Social Protection Department, Office of Migrant Adaptation and Integration.</li> <li>7. International links with leading European Universities of the intercultural mediators training.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Low financial support of research in the field of mediation from regional Scientific Funds</li> <li>2. Weak intercultural competencies of the teaching staff.</li> <li>3. Weak commitment in intercultural mediation development University authorities.</li> <li>4. Ineffective monitoring strategy of data on teacher education in the field of mediation issues in the region.</li> <li>5. Lack of staff in specialized areas e.g. full-time intercultural mediator for ethnic conflict resolution</li> <li>6. Lack of financial support for the training of trainers - mediators;</li> <li>7. Lack of financial support for the participation of teachers and students in educational events on intercultural mediation</li> </ol>

Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. High demand for extra training courses for teacher in the field of mediation and conflict solving</li> <li>2. High demand for in-service training for teachers.</li> <li>3. Mentoring of teachers in their status as researchers and practicing mediators.</li> <li>4. Recognition given by professional association of teacher-mediators of Krasnoyarsk region</li> <li>5. Strengthening relationship with Department of International Affairs in Government of Krasnoyarsk region.</li> <li>6. Engaging international partners on intercultural mediator teacher education issues.</li> <li>7. Collaboration with other departments in the university.</li> <li>8. Capacity to conduct comparative studies by evaluating output of different teacher education programmers' in Russia and EU</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of a regional concept for the development of school mediation services</li> <li>2. The resistance of teachers to improve their skills in mediation at the university, in view of the workload</li> <li>3. Formal approach, underestimation of the possibilities of mediation by the administration and / or teaching staff of the educational organization;</li> <li>4. The lack of systematic work in the formation of an active civic stand of teachers and students in solving intercultural conflicts.</li> <li>5. The reluctance of the administration of educational institutions to cooperate in resolution of the intercultural conflicts through the involvement of professional mediators</li> </ol>

Creating a model of the intercultural mediators training, we maintained the idea that school mediation is an innovative pedagogical method and requires some effort to convey its importance and efficiency to all actors of the Russian educational practice.

During the analysis of foreign experience in the intercultural mediators training, the experience of many European universities and the methodology of practical training of intercultural mediators in the project Erasmus+ TIMES-2016 (Train Intercultural Mediators for a Multicultural Europe) were studied. Comparative analysis of European models of training intercultural mediators was carried out in the study of models of training universities in France (Master's Program on Social and Commercial Mediation and Interpretation (MISC) of Paris Diderot University), Portugal (Master's in Intercultural mediation and Social Intervention, Polytechnic Institute of Leiria), Spain (Master in Mediation, Negotiation and Conflict Resolution, University of Madrid), Belgium (Course for Developmental Agents and Intercultural Mediators organized by CBAI in Brussels), Germany (Training for Language and Integration Mediators, Hochschule Berlin, for Social Services and Education, the Universitätsklinikum Hamburg-Eppendorf, for Health, Universität Mainz), Poland (Master's program in Intercultural Mediation, Institute of Sociology at University of Wrocław), Finland (Master's program in Peace, Mediation and Conflict Research, Tampere University), etc. The results of the content analysis of the curricula showed that despite the difference in the duration of training (from 1200 - 1500 to 540-750 hours, from six months to two years), all programs have a practical orientation of training.

For example, practical training in the form of internship lasts 588 hours (700 teaching units). Three theoretical learning phases of six months each alternate with three internship phases in which participants get to know intensively their future fields of intervention and acquire institutional knowledge. Training scheme of intercultural mediators included formal tuition (theoretical), learning on the job, supervision and coaching (TIMES 2016). Practical training is provided in different phases of theoretical training. Intensity of practical training increases with time. Coaching is an important part of training. Usually two models of intercultural mediators training are used: model 1 first theoretical course, than internship or practice at a workplace; model 2 is to gradually introduce on-the-job training and coaching, in parallel with theoretical training. After the completion of about 77 % of theoretical training, practical training and coaching would be introduced, at increasing intensity.

The leading idea of our model is the organization of practice-oriented training for teachers to work as intercultural mediators in school mediation services, the establishment of productive dialogue and intercultural communication in the educational society for harmonization of interethnic relations, prevention and resolution of conflicts, work with both children and adults (teachers, parents, administrative staff). An important key to the success of on-the-job training is the selection of proper hosting institutions.

For SibFU Master's program of the intercultural mediators training the main partners are the Governor's of the Krasnoyarsk region Public Relations office, local education authorities, ethnically diverse schools, the Center for Social Adaptation and Integration of migrants, the House of Peoples'

Friendship of the Krasnoyarsk region, the Center for Integration of the International Students of SibFU, Training centers for providing educational services to migrants. The selection of partners network for the organization of practice sessions at the workplace was based on the following principles:

- relevance,
- adequate opportunities for the host partner to organize the practice,
- absence of bureaucratic barriers to organize internship in a fast and flexible way, without overly time-consuming bureaucratic procedures,
- friendly supporting environment – a hosting institution has a culture that favorites learning and is trainee-friendly.

Contracts and formal agreements were signed with all the network partners of mediator training in accordance with the legislation in the country.

A long-term study of the socio-cultural diversity of Siberia in the framework of TEMPUS and RFBR projects resulted in development of conceptual model of training intercultural mediators for the education sector based on a new educational paradigm in line with the European experience and competence approach (O. Smolyaninova, 2018). The qualification framework integrating European standards and universal descriptors of the Master's level of higher education in the training of mediators was designed and partially tested.

### 3 RESULTS

The model of intercultural mediators training is based on the three professional standards: teacher's, mediator's and specialist's in the field of interethnic and religious relations as well as the Federal State Educational Standard (FSES) of Psychology and Education Master's degree training.

We also focused on the European Code of Conduct for mediators. At the same time, the model of competencies is collective and multidimensional, reflecting various aspects of intercultural mediator's professional activity, professional functions and activities (Fig. 1). Designing the model, we took into account different forms of mediator's work aimed at children and adults, involved in intercultural conflicts in the educational environment.

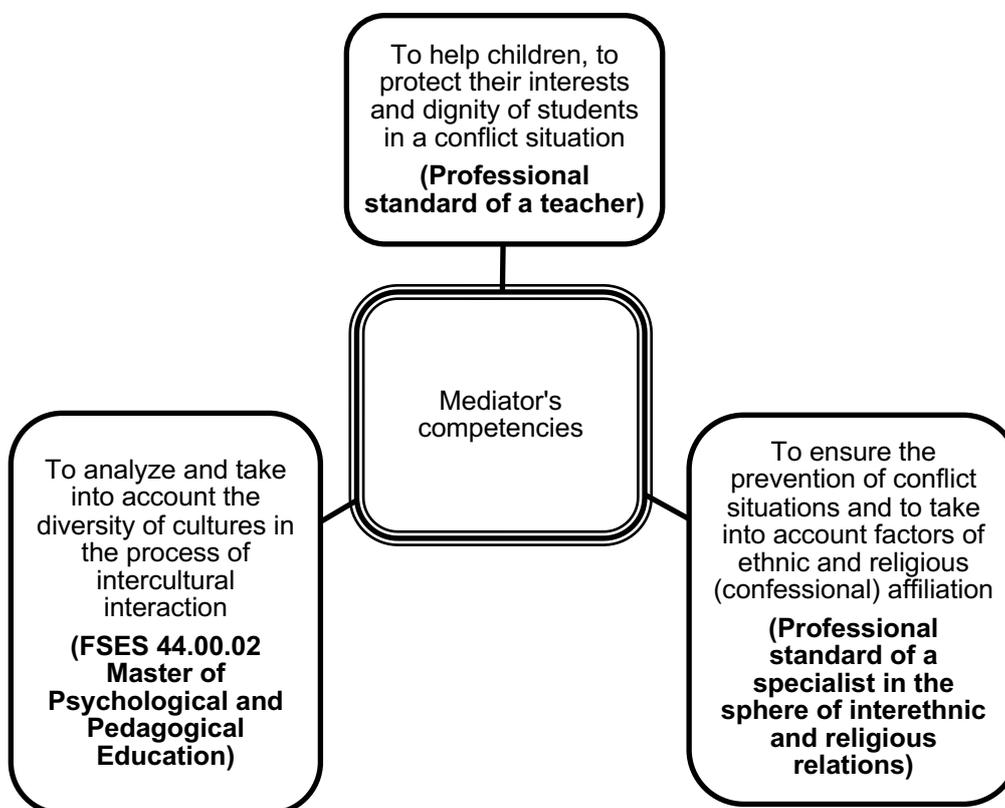


Figure 1. An intercultural mediator's competencies based on the three professional standards

The principles for ensuring the effectiveness of teaching the school mediation method and increasing its attractiveness:

- Legitimacy. The work is carried out within the legal framework, taking into account the right of the child to participate in decisions affecting his interests.
- Intrinsic motivation. Teachers enrolled in the Master's program participate in training voluntarily, learn additional material independently and feel responsibility for the learning outcomes.
- Lifelong learning. Education is not limited to the training process under the program and continues in the form of support and supervision: conversations, consultations, trainings, supervision.
- Availability. The theoretical material should be presented clearly, meeting student's understanding and expertise. Students are offered extensive additional material for the self-study. Materials of the lectures, seminars, basic and additional reading, Internet resources are presented in the distance learning courses supported by Moodle.
- Multiple aspects of development. The work is aimed at the positive development of students' personal resources, formation of adequate self-esteem, development of skills and strategies for conflict-free behavior.

Designing the Master's program model included five stages:

- 1 studying the experience of training and work of the European intercultural mediators in education,
- 2 the teaching staff training with involvement of Russian and foreign trainers in mediation, coaching, intercultural communication,
- 3 study of the demand for mediators in the Krasnoyarsk region
- 4 piloting the program module within the international youth Summer School Intercultural Mediation in Education
- 5 development, review and launch of Master's program with parallel e-learning support in the MOODLE.

The concept is in establishing fundamental, theoretical, practical and qualification components for professional competency building of the students. The conceptual scheme of the intercultural mediators training in the SibFU Master's program is presented on the Fig.2.

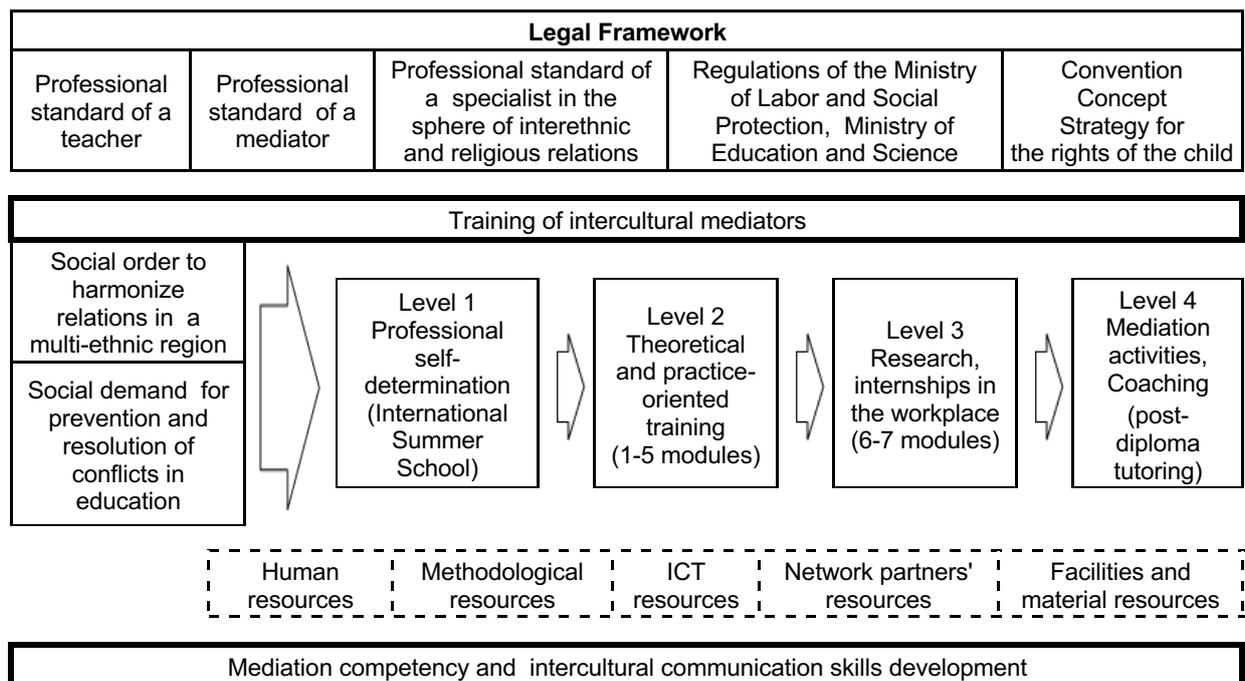


Figure 2. Schematic model of the Master's program of Siberian Federal University

To describe the presented model scheme, we would give some explanations. The first level is propaedeutic and is associated with professional self-determination of future graduate students as mediators. It is done with correlation of personal intentions, diagnosis of personal resources, introducing the best Russian and foreign practices of school mediation in the international youth Summer School Intercultural Mediation in Education. The second level is the theoretical and practice-oriented training of students to build the mediation competencies. The third level is the internship on the basis of field practices at the network of partners, allowing putting into practice the acquired knowledge and skills and developing the mediation competencies. This stage ends up with a report on practices and research, presentation of the learning outcomes in the e-portfolio of a student. As a result of the practice and implementation of the study, students receive a comprehensive formative assessment from the head of the Master's program, the supervisor from the University, from a representative of the internship organization. Formative assessment with feedback and analysis of student portfolio materials contributes to professional development, motivation, formation of independence and responsibility of the student. The fourth level is an independent activity as a mediator in one of the partner organizations of the University. At this stage, support, discussion of the results, the definition of deficits and directions of development in the post-study period are expected. Additional trainings, consultations, master classes can be held.

The master's program Mediation in Education includes the following modules: methodological, management, legal, instrumental, communicative modules, internship and research work. The internships are organized to provide professional practice under the supervision, introducing professional activities at school services of reconciliation and mediation centers. The program is competency and resource-oriented and is studied for 2 years (120 credits).

Among the main training methods there were: field work, problem learning, case studies, role-playing games, modeling, active training, internship. To organize feedback and study the effectiveness of the model we used questionnaires, observation, content analysis, interviews and portfolio.

The first semester courses (started from September 2018) mostly belong to the methodological module are done in blended learning supported by Moodle. From the first year of the program students have the apprentice status at work placement. For the certain months they work part-time in a professional environment. Practical training took place in the City Center of Professional Self-determination of Students, Regional Center of Social Adaptation and Integration of migrants, schools and gymnasiums with multinational pupils for the follow-up of trainees. It was supervised by staff members of the institutions. They cooperated with external coordinators / supervisors from SibFU, who were responsible for Master's students.

## **4 CONCLUSIONS**

The described model of practice-oriented training of multicultural mediators for schools at Siberian Federal University offers principles and a general concept that can be an effective basis for the practical training of intercultural mediators in Russia. It should be noted that specific regional conditions of practical training can be essential for adjusting the methodology and changing of the program structure. The source of inspiration for the program development was the best practices of training multicultural mediators in Europe, primarily from Portugal, Italy and Germany. In the Krasnoyarsk region the municipal and regional migrant services are crucial structures to provide training and internship of the Master's students at the workplace. Intercultural mediators training at Siberian Federal University Master's program is aimed at the development of intercultural dialogue and harmonization of interethnic relations in the educational environment as well as integration of international students in the host community. Improving the quality of learning masters-intercultural mediators involve promoting interaction with Russian and European universities, increasing academic mobility and welcoming visit-professors and professional coaches in mediation.

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