

UNESCO SCIENTISTS ON EDUCATIONAL POTENTIAL OF SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS

Summary. This article deals with the problem of educational potential of school textbooks. All the conclusions were made basing on the materials of UNESCO scientists. It is well-known that the concept of educational potential of textbooks is highly complicated. UNESCO researchers include there understanding and respecting cultural differences, defending gender equality, promoting peace, popularization of human rights and freedoms and also overcoming harmful stereotypes. The article also gives some recommendations on improvement of education quality, promoting values, attitudes and learning skills for living in a globalized society and teaching students to understand the notion of peace and to disseminate it internationally. As educational system of Ukraine is changing rapidly nowadays the theme is of great value.

Key words: textbook, education, culture, gender, peace, human rights, stereotypes.

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ВЧЕНІ ЮНЕСКО ПРО ВИХОВНУ СПРЯМОВАНІСТЬ ШКІЛЬНИХ ПІДРУЧНИКІВ

Анотація. У статті розкрито проблему виховного потенціалу шкільного підручника (на основі досліджень, проведених ЮНЕСКО). Вважаємо, що дослідження особливостей навчальних книг потребують особливої уваги, адже вони є основним джерелом знань для учнів. Підручник містить інформацію не лише про предмет, що вивчається, але й формує в школярів загальне уявлення про світ, традиції, норми життя в суспільстві та цінності. Зрозуміло, що поняття «виховний потенціал» є багатогранне. Науковці ЮНЕСКО включають сюди розуміння та повагу культурних відмінностей, захист гендерної рівності, поширення ідеї миру, популяризацію прав та свободи людини, а також подолання різного роду стереотипів. Якісний підручник позбавлений стереотипів та упередженого ставлення. При укладанні навчальної книги цього можна досягнути лише за умови реалізації підходу, що ґрунтується на правах людини. Розглянуто стратегії для подолання стереотипів та упередженого ставлення у підручнику (використання мови, позбавленої упереджень; відображення різноманітних самотностей, притаманних певній культурі та народу; залучення прав людини). Вчені особливо увагу приділяють поняттю «культури», яка є основою для подальшого формування особистості. Саме культурні реалії, в яких живе людина, визначають набуття цінностей в майбутньому. Поняття культури входить у кожен шкільний предмет. Однак особливо важливо правильно формувати в учнів не лише поняття культури власного народу, а й міжкультурну свідомість. У статті також містяться рекомендації щодо покращення якості навчання, поширення цінностей, ставлень і навичок для життя у глобалізованому світі. Значну увагу приділено поняттю «миру», імплементація даного феномену в освітній процес та поширення на міжнародному рівні. Так як система освіти в Україні зараз зазнає значних змін, вважаємо, що тема є актуальною для вивчення.

Ключові слова: підручник, навчання, культура, гендер, мир, права людини, стереотипи.

The quality of school education depends on many factors; one of the dominant is a textbook as a model of a holistic learning process (Kodliuk, 2006; Lerner, 1993; Savchenko, 2012). This type of educational literature represents in itself, on the one hand, the main elements of the substantive content – knowledge, skills and abilities, creative abilities, emotional and value attitude (as a carrier of the content of education), and on the other – technology teaching and learning (as a means of teaching for teachers and students). Therefore, the development and creation of textbooks of a new generation is an important task for school education.

In this aspect, it is interesting to know the UNESCO's 60-year experience, which highlighted three key elements in the development of textbook-making (Brugeilles, Cromer, 2009): quality, accessibility and human rights education. We should also consider here the textbook designation as the main mean of socialization of schoolchildren, the holder of values: "In addition to the transfer of knowledge, the textbook also establishes political and social norms of society. The textbook facilitates a global understanding of the history and rules that exist

in society, as well as the norms of life with other people" (Schissler, 1989-90); textbooks also convey the traditions that society has been developing for decades (Pingel, 2009), and sometimes even centuries; form self-assessments of the individual, and on the other hand create certain boundaries between other cultures and nations.

Purpose of the article. To reveal the main provisions of the UNESCO studies concerning the educational potential of school textbooks.

Scientists Lässig and Pohl state that the educational materials used at school, such as those presented in the textbooks, have the greatest influence on the formation of the views of younger generation. Textbooks convey not only knowledge but also social values, political preferences, understanding of history and the world as a whole. Teachers and students trust the textbook as an authentic and objective source of information; convinced that it is accurate and balanced, is based on recent scientific studies and pedagogical practice (Lässig, Pohl, 2009). In some cases, textbooks are the first and only books read by a person.

Moreover, the interpretation and representation of knowledge in the textbook is usually considered

as mean of transferring norms, values and models of social behavior. "Some authors have indicated that creating a textbook is equivalent to the selection of values and norms that give hope for the preservation of social ties and harmonious relationships between people and organizations (Mallo-Bouvier, Pozo-Medina, 1991)".

Among the educational tasks posed to the textbook authors is the proper reflection of *cultural values* in the educational book.

As stated by Giddens, culture is a set of ideas that define what is important, necessary and desirable (Giddens, 1991). Abstract ideas transform into norms and form a certain environment for people, and rules of behavior, reflect values of culture.

The cultural dimension in the textbooks refers to different layers, which, according to Hostfede, are similar to a peculiar model of bulb: the core of culture is values, and additional layers reflect them with the help of rituals, symbols and heroes (Hostfede, 2004).

First of all, according to the studies of textbook researchers Gachukra and Chang, it is important to formulate the concept of the national culture in students.

Culture is a dynamic category. In a rapidly evolving society, the culture of children is different from that of their parents. Gachukra believes that culture has changed dramatically throughout the last century around the world through the influence of learning, wars and migration processes and the latest technology. The school is one of the most important socialization systems, as well as the structure that most closely reflects the culture of a particular country (Gachukra, 2005). Cultural values are laid out in curricula and textbooks. They are understood as carriers of culture subconsciously.

The textbook transmits all the values that exist in the nation. That is why it is necessary to isolate those features of culture, which will serve as a benchmark for the formation of new generations. As stated in Gachukra and Chung's "The Textbook Writer's Manual", in a mathematical textbook in different countries, some students count the number of soldiers with weapons in their hands, and others – plants. In both cases, children will perform mathematical actions correctly, but viewing moral values, one can conclude that in the first country the war is glorified, and in the second one – attention is drawn to the environment (Gachukra, Chang, 2005).

The learning process reflects all the cultural realities and values that a certain society lives in. The concept of culture is included in each school subject. It is especially important for students to form correctly not only the concept of national culture, but also the *intercultural consciousness*. However, it should be done professionally. Authors of some textbooks, for example, idealize life in a foreign country, while underestimate the possibilities of theirs (Gachukra, Chang, 2005). Therefore, Gachukra has indicated that it is very important to describe adequately both the advantages and disadvantages of each of them in order to allow the students to make conclusions on their own.

As stated in Mexico City Declaration on the Cultural Policies World Conference on Cultural Policies the textbook should also be used to explain the

differences between cultures, as well as to study each one in particular in its broad sense: "an entire set of spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional qualities that characterize a society or a social group" (Brugeilles, Cromer, 2009).

Scientist Mikk argues that the textbook is an important source of information about oneself and the others. The curriculum erodes fear of foreign, basing on the desire to know and understand other cultures. The textbooks, according to the researcher, should emphasize not only cultural differences, but similarities, as we all are part of mankind; should reflect the positive aspects of the lives of others and the benefits of social co-operation in various fields: ecology, science, technology, cultural exchanges and tourism (Dakmara, Jean, 2007).

UNESCO scientists have proposed the definition of the concept – 'protecting cultural diversity' it is considered to be a kind of ethical imperative, which cannot be separated from the universal right of the child for education (Pingel, 2009). Culture is a problematic issue in many debates, because learning is directly related to it. Mankind transfers all of its cultural assets to younger generations through education. Teaching writing and reading, opening world history and geography, learning foreign languages, gaining knowledge in literature, art, mathematics, science and the latest technology – all these are ways to understand the complexity and development of cultural and diverse societies. Such learning emphasizes the interdependence of cultures; encourages students to develop national peculiarities, and also to remember that they are part of mankind, which consists of many cultures. Knowing the concept of culture helps children to understand its differences and deepen its knowledge, as well as expands opportunities for the development of personal and professional qualities, leads to a richer moral, spiritual, emotional and intellectual life and makes students active citizens.

Since the 1970s, UNESCO has begun to discuss the issue of *gender equality*. The research program was launched after the United Nations International Conference on Women's Role and Place in Society, held in Copenhagen in 1980. The main objective of the program is to define and characterize gender discrimination and possible ways to overcome it. Scientists argue that the issue of gender inequality in education is quite relevant, especially for underdeveloped and developing countries where the low level of women's education prevails.

Studies which were made for UNESCO meeting called "Promoting Gender Equality in Education. Gender in Education Network Asia – Pacific" show that men are usually portrayed in prestigious spheres such as politics, science, economics, and less in the household or in the education of children, which is almost always given to women. By illustrating various role models using both genders, textbook authors can awaken curiosity, tolerance and critical thinking of students. Writers of educational books should also pay attention to the quantitative balance between the use of male and female heroes in the past and in the present, explaining at the same time the historical reasons for the absence of a man or woman at a certain time in any field of activity. Demonstrating different gender roles for girls, boys, men and women, the

textbook encourages students to acquire different skills, regardless of their gender identity, which will allow them to "try" upon themselves those behavior patterns that at first glance seemed to be forbidden or inaccessible. By explaining to students the phenomenon of marginalization (the process of excluding people from the spheres of society's life based on racial, religious, ethnic, gender, cultural or other characteristics of individuals or segments of the population) and equality, UNESCO scholars who took part in International Meeting of Experts: Fostering a Culture of Intercultural Dialogue in the Arab States encourage them to reflect on the idea of gender roles and possible social changes.

Scientists assure that the creation of quality textbooks will help students to understand the causes and consequences of gender inequality; understand that both sexes have the same rights and responsibilities. Educational books should help pupils understand the role of men and women and see those aspects of social change that is needed to form fair society. It is important that a teacher who uses the textbook in the learning process could properly give examples and explain the historical background of this phenomenon and help students understand the problem.

The concept of gender equality is closely related to the problem of culture, since, regardless of whether it is a textbook on mathematics or history, they all reflect certain values. For example, men and boys in the textbook are often depicted in active work (while working), while women are assigned passive roles (watching a television program, listening to music, etc.) (Gachukra, Chang, 2005). All these ideas have a significant impact on the perception of the world.

Many scientists cooperating with UNESCO pay a lot of attention to the issue of *peace* and how it is covered in textbooks. For example, Kouchok emphasizes the need to implement the concept of peace in everyday situations, and not just as a counteraction to the war. Students need to understand and observe a peaceful attitude in their relationships with family, friends, neighbors, colleagues, and teachers. In this way they will be able to overcome all forms of cruelty and resolve conflicts constructively. In addition, children should apply the principles of peace in relation to the environment and tolerance to different types of minorities. The scientist also emphasizes that it is not necessary to introduce an additional subject in the program; it is enough to integrate the concept of peace into all educational branches. The textbook itself can become a tool for solving this problem, thanks to relevant illustrations, positive texts and instructive examples.

However, in Egypt, the government went a different way: they introduced a new school subject "Morality and Values of Learning." This was done to overcome the hostility between religious denominations (Dakmara, Jean, 2007). During the course of study, students have to deal with such concepts as love, peace, friendship, cooperation, honesty, sincerity, trust, success, modesty, happiness, responsibility, generosity, solidarity. Teachers actively use such teaching methods as game, narrative, role-play, drama performances, debates and discussions. The main requirement for a teacher to lead the course "Morality and Values of Learning" is to adhere to the

principle of six "E": examples, explanations, exhortation, environment, experience, enjoyment. The examples should be accessible and consistent with the psychological development and age of the students; explanations are intended to provide an understanding of the meaning of the phenomenon being studied; the exhortation should teach the ability to act correctly, in accordance with the norms of society. The teacher has to do a lot to create a friendly and positive environment in the classroom.

The last but not the least important factor is the students' satisfaction and motivation in studying morality and value orientations. Scientist Kouchok has indicated that the principle of six "E" as a qualitative criterion for education in the spirit of peace relates to society as a whole. Education for peace is a task not only for schools and families, society and media also play an important role in this process (Dakmara, Jean, 2007).

During the UNESCO conference which took place in France in 2014, scientists identified three basic principles for creating textbooks to ensure peace and sustainable development of pupils:

- to improve the quality of education;
- to promote values, attitudes and learning skills for living in a globalized society;
- to teach students to understand the notion of peace and to disseminate it internationally.

To improve learning, school textbooks should:

- implement education that meets the needs and desires of the students and be fixed by the objectives of the curriculum;
- encourage teachers and students to focus on general concepts and ability to apply them in everyday life, taking into account the needs and interests of society;
- take into account the level of students' development, the complexity of the text and the sequence of information in the course in the educational process;
- allow the differentiation of the content and format of the presentation of the text according to the needs of the students, taking into account the different learning styles, languages, cultural background and interests;
- provide students with the opportunity to attend and get acquainted with current events and discoveries to gain new experience and motivation for lifelong learning;
- apply personally oriented, interactive and practical approaches in learning process that contribute to the development of creativity and critical thinking in all areas of education;
- enlist related topics and apply other teaching materials;
- be checked and updated frequently to reflect variables at the local, national, regional, and international levels.

To promote values, attitudes and learning skills for living in a globalized society, textbooks should:

- promote values, skills and attitudes that facilitate peace, asserting justice, respect, equality and life in harmony with the environment;
- systematically and constructively integrate joint training and other types of activities that assert peace during the program;
- reflect realistic and accurate information about social, cultural and religious groups, especially those that are misunderstood in the media;

- give examples on how different social, ethnic and cultural groups lived and live together in harmony and interaction;

- focus on cultural, social and religious values that promote peaceful coexistence and avoid differences that can lead to the spread and strengthening of negative stereotypes;

- give advice on discussions and conflict resolution in controversial issues that generate anger, jealousy and hatred in the classroom or community;

- involve traditional art and pedagogical techniques (storytelling, game, music, theater performance) to the work in a way that students form values, skills and attitudes toward life in society.

To make students understand the concept of peace and to disseminate it at the international level, textbooks should:

- increase awareness of international agreements and commitments regarding human rights, gender equality, cultural diversity and environmental protection;

- respect diversity and appreciate the contribution of previous civilizations and cultures to human development, which plays a great role in constructing an intercultural dialogue;

- acknowledge students about the main units of humanity (tribe, nation, race, ethnicity and community) in a globalized world;

- develop historical consciousness and evaluation of various historical data and their impact on global problems and events;

- encourage understanding of local, national events in a global context, as well as perceiving their own nation by the residents of other countries;

- use the comparative method in study of religions, focusing on the interconnection and interaction of religious and philosophical traditions of the world;

- provide various activities to understand the causes and effects of war and conflict in understanding the need for peace both within and outside the classroom;

- use methods that encourage students for search, critical thinking, innovation, media literacy and cutting-edge technology to overcome the effects of globalization.

According to the UNESCO meeting on Textbook Development Issues held on July 14-15, 2007, there were made recommendations to spread peace:

- there is a need for many countries to overcome the bureaucracy associated with the process of developing, distributing and approving textbooks. The main goal should be the quality and availability of educational materials;

- to draw teachers' attention to the use of textbooks in the classroom (to find out how the textbook affects students' knowledge and skills and whether full potential of the textbook is used);

- to expand the framework of international cooperation at all stages of the textbook research and development;

- to improve and establish cooperation between all parties involved in the textbook writing process (including teachers, students and parents).

On the basis of the conference held in December 2016, UNESCO scientists published a research paper entitled "Textbook Pave the Way to Sustainable Development." Having analyzed textbooks on history, jurisprudence, geography, sociology and other

disciplines, scientists, along with colleagues from George Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, addressed the following issues:

- increasing attention to the environment in the textbook;

- identification of major global problems and solutions;

- awareness of oneself as a part of mankind, not just a nation;

- reflection of the attitude towards minorities (national, religious, linguistic, cultural, ethnic, and people with disabilities);

- textbooks are able to prevent conflicts and cruelty.

On the basis of the materials examined, the researchers concluded that in the problems of peace, human rights and self-awareness as part of mankind, the textbooks should be deprived of stereotypes, reflect the true facts and ensure:

- studying human rights;

- accurate and authentic display of events;

- accurate and authentic display of groups and people with deviations, as well as different types of minorities;

- tolerant attitude towards others;

- responsible citizenship;

- religious affiliation and sensitivity;

- social, civil and moral responsibility;

- global awareness;

- balanced display of controversial issues;

- correct selection of illustrations.

It is also important:

- to pay attention to the historical narratives, namely: whether physical strength and military confrontation are supported; to reduce the impact of armed conflicts on people, economy and nation;

- to include stories (true and fictitious) about peaceful conflict resolution, respect and tolerance towards people and consolidate everything learned with discussion questions and tasks, during which the teacher can help students form a positive behavior pattern;

- to include illustrations that stimulate development and personal interest of students.

The textbook is a tool for better understanding of other beliefs and respect for the diversity of beliefs that exist in the world. The curriculum must overcome a biased attitude towards other beliefs and respect the right of everyone to express theirs. The textbooks make a significant contribution to the development of tolerant attitude, critical thinking, to overcome offensive stereotypes and discrimination, as well as understanding the importance of the independent choice of each person. Also, UNESCO scientists advise not to represent any religion as something universal; on the contrary, a person has to know different doctrines and thoughts in order to choose independently the one that suits the best. In this way, one can avoid imposing the importance of a particular religion.

The textbooks reflect the various links between rights and religious freedoms. For example, in some countries there is a discrepancy between civil law and religion, there is a distinction between religion and political and legal institutions. In such countries, citizenship is not defined as belonging to a particular religion. All members of society are equal, despite their religious beliefs. In other coun-

tries religion is approved by the constitution and is one of the important parts of the political life of the nation. Therefore, according to the researchers, it is important that the textbook reflect the diversity and complexity of the issue of religion faithfully and accurately.

Migration processes lead to the fact that there are different regional and social minorities in one country. In order not to discriminate minorities, textbook designers are advised to solve the problem in two ways. The first, and not always possible, is the involvement of minority representatives in the writing and compilation of textbooks. Such decision does not always produce the desired results, as the textbook can more clearly distinguish between people rather than promote harmonious and unambiguous perception of the material. The second way is to create additional textbooks for minorities that adequately cover all realities which really exist or have taken place at a certain period of the nation's historical development. German scholars argue that this is the correct approach to the problem, since minority representatives living in the territory of another country need to know both the characteristics of the culture they live in and their homeland.

Scientist Späth analyzes one more important educational aspect of the textbook – *overcoming stereotypes*. In his opinion, the stereotype is a simplified view of a certain characteristic of a person, group, subject, a situation that is based on a false generalization, without taking into account individual cases. Ethnic stereotypes are quite common in the textbooks, which mean a simplified convincing generalization of the characteristics of a particular ethnic group. Stereotypes are a powerful source of influence and often lead to misunderstandings (Dakmara, Jean, 2007). When concluding the textbook, authors should avoid false judgments that distort content and change the perception of students about the subject.

The most common stereotypes in the textbooks are those relating to:

- age;
- appearance;
- gender;
- race;
- nationality;
- social institutions;
- religion;
- professions (Dakmara, Jean, 2007).

Due to the cooperative paper called “Making textbook content inclusive. A focus on religion, gender and culture” published in 2017 UNESCO scientists have indicated that the high-quality textbook is devoid of stereotypes and bias. This can only be achieved if a human rights-based approach is implemented. This approach allows you to focus on diversity and tolerance towards it and break off the offensive stereotypes by applying the following three strategies:

- usage of a language devoid of prejudice;
- display of various self-sufficiency (inherent in a certain culture and people);
- involvement of human rights.

These strategies are interconnected; they directly relate to the concepts of religion, gender and culture in the process of textbook creation. We will explain their content briefly.

1. Usage of a language devoid of prejudice.

The language of the curriculum should optimize the learning objectives with the aim of transferring information and knowledge, as well as promoting dialogue and critical thinking. The textbooks also teach students how to interpret the knowledge gained. By paying particular attention to the language by which the textbook is written, authors should make sure that all students are involved in the search process.

Textbook authors should pay particular attention to (here are some examples):

- information about persuasion and world views (avoidance of terms and generalizations that seem to be neutral but may decrease the significance of other social or religious groups. For example, the phrase "All Christians fast before Easter" is, at first glance, neutral, but it can cause a series of discussions, because not all people follow the fast for some reason, therefore, it is better to use it as follows: "Many Christians fast before Easter");

- usage of foreign origin words (it should be ensured that the concepts and terms reflect the linguistic peculiarities of the nation, which promotes the understanding of the text. The authors should check the etymology of the word, and if there is an equivalent in the target language, it is better to use it instead of the borrowed term, especially if it concerns textbooks for primary and secondary schools);

- usage of words that have gender identity (gender stereotypes should be avoided, where it is possible. For example, actor – actress, businessman – businesswoman, and also represent men and women involved in various activities: homework, work in a hospital, in government or scientific research).

2. Display of various self-sufficiency (inherent in a certain culture and people).

A peculiarity has two meanings: the way people see themselves and how others perceive them. “Sen has indicated that the assertion that people can be categorized as a single sign is unacceptable, because we perceive ourselves as members of different groups; in fact we belong to many of them. The feature is ambiguous and variable in time. No country or even a person has any unchanging peculiarities." This has happened because people have become more mobile, and migration processes are happening often and quickly. Because of this and other causes of globalization, people are experiencing greater diversity in all spheres of life than ever before.

Textbook writers make a lot of effort to simplify any controversial facts and interpretation of events and make the book text adequate and accessible. Much attention should be paid to the accurate and true reflection of cultural peculiarities that form society. Scholars and textbook authors must develop an approach that takes into account the diversity of features that exist in society and teaches respect, emphasizing changes and interrelationships that exist between them.

3. Involvement of human rights.

Human rights are moral and legal norms declared in international agreements that uphold equality and value of every person, regardless of their culture, religion or gender identity. The textbook plays an important role in conveying this information, but students also need to know about documents that have been ratified by governments

of different countries and the UN, in particular to ensure freedom, equality and non-discrimination. Understanding and knowledge of the UN Declaration on Human Rights broadens the worldview of pupils. For example, a textbook can provide information about cultural diversity in the world and society, depicting differences in language and art. The curriculum also protects cultural rights as one of general. Concerning gender equality, the textbook can encourage discussions about changes that have taken place throughout history. For centuries equality was not the norm in different parts of the world. Women have suffered, and sometimes suffer from various forms of discrimination: from salary amount to access to work and education. The textbook's main aim is to show how the situation has changed.

Here are some examples to consider when it comes to the issue of human rights while textbook writing:

- display of conflicts related to human rights (pupils need to realize that human rights are universal. Teacher must show students patient attitude and explain that the concept of human rights is not a problem that you just need to know, but a dogma that must be defended);

- study of political rights (they can vary in each country, especially according to different historical epochs);

- status of the individual and civil rights (gender, race, religious equality, etc.);

- social and economic rights (informing about behavioral models of women and men, employment trends in music, science, technology, art, religion and other fields);

- familiarization with human rights, especially cultural (to inform students about international legislation, as well as the UN Declaration on Human Rights).

- German researcher Janssen R. describes the concept of "moral and intellectual racism." Having analyzed the school textbooks on history from 1875 to 1999 (for research, the scientist chose the theme "Early History of Humanity"), he argues that the textbooks have been perfected only superficially: the number of illustrations has increased, paper quality has improved, and sections have been complemented with practical tasks. At the same time, both content and structure remained unchanged. People usually get stereotypes through cultural mediators, as soon as culture changes reality partly and expresses convictions and values in stereotyped images. On the other hand, not all stereotypes are harmful, but students must understand that some of them are false and, as a result, their convictions must be based on the accurate and critical selection of truthful statements in the course of study (Dakmara, Jean, 2007).

Thus, the analysis of scientific achievements on the issue of research suggests that the educational potential of textbooks is disclosed by UNESCO researchers through the following aspects: the reflection of national culture and cultural achievements of humanity; realization of gender equality principle; creation of textbooks promoting peace and sustainable development of pupils; representation of issues related to religion; an important educational aspect of the textbook is overcoming of stereotypes.

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