

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF FORMING ECOLOGICAL CULTURE IN AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract: This article analyzes the theoretical foundations of forming ecological culture in an inclusive educational environment from a scientific and pedagogical perspective. Ecological culture is interpreted as an integrative quality that reflects an individual's conscious attitude toward nature, commitment to ecological values, and responsible behavior. Furthermore, it is substantiated that the formation of ecological culture in an inclusive environment should be based on the principles of equal opportunities, individual adaptation, interdisciplinary integration, and the ideas of sustainable development.

Keywords: inclusive educational environment, ecological culture, ecological consciousness, ecological values, ecological behavior, theoretical foundations, learner-centered education, differentiated approach, interdisciplinary integration, sustainable development.

In the 21st century, global environmental challenges facing humanity—such as climate change, biodiversity loss, resource scarcity, and issues of environmental security—are placing new demands on the education system. In this context, environmental education is emerging not only as a component of a specific academic subject but also as a strategic social mechanism that ensures sustainable societal development. Therefore, organizing environmental education within the education system, defining its content, and implementing it effectively require methodologically grounded approaches.

The methodological approaches to environmental education determine its scientific and theoretical foundation and make it possible to organize this process in a systematic, consistent, and goal-oriented manner. Methodology reflects the scientific principles, methods, and conceptual bases for studying environmental education. In this process, it is essential to analyze the nature–human–society relationship as an integrated system, to form environmental values, to orient education toward practical activity, and to develop competencies.

At the international level, the conceptual foundations for the development of environmental education are closely linked with the ideas of sustainable development developed by organizations such as UNESCO and the United Nations. These documents emphasize the need to organize environmental education based on the principles of interdisciplinary integration, a systemic approach, and continuity.

A number of methodological approaches are applied in the scientific study and practical implementation of environmental education. These approaches serve to ensure a deep and systematic understanding of environmental processes and the effective organization of the educational process.

First, the systemic approach forms the theoretical basis of environmental education. According to this approach, nature and society are viewed as interconnected complex systems. Every environmental problem—whether climate change, desertification, or biodiversity loss—is a multifactorial process that must be analyzed not as an isolated phenomenon but within a system of cause-and-effect relationships. The systemic approach is an important methodological tool in shaping ecological thinking.

Second, the integrative approach предполагает studying environmental education in close connection with various disciplines. Integration with biology, geography, chemistry, economics,

and law makes it possible to understand environmental problems through a comprehensive perspective. This principle aligns with the interdisciplinary integration ideas promoted by UNESCO.

Third, the axiological approach is aimed at forming a system of environmental values. Environmental awareness should not remain merely at the level of knowledge but must evolve into a moral position and a guiding principle of life. This approach strengthens an individual's responsible attitude toward nature.

Fourth, the activity-oriented approach integrates environmental education with practical activities. Project-based methods, research work, environmental campaigns, and monitoring activities engage learners in solving real-world problems. This enhances the practical significance of environmental knowledge.

The competency-based approach identifies the formation of environmental competencies as its main objective. The ability to analyze environmental issues, find effective solutions, and make responsible decisions are considered key outcomes of modern environmental education.

Thus, the methodological foundations of environmental education are manifested through the integration of systemic, integrative, axiological, activity-oriented, and competency-based approaches. These approaches enable not only a deep theoretical understanding of environmental education but also its effective implementation in pedagogical practice.

The main principles of environmental education were scientifically substantiated in the Tbilisi Declaration adopted in 1977 at the initiative of UNESCO. This declaration defined the conceptual foundations for organizing environmental education at a global level and clarified its goals and objectives.

First of all, the principle of continuity предполагает that environmental education should begin from preschool education and continue through higher education and throughout life. Environmental awareness and culture are not formed through one-time instruction but through gradual and systematic influence. Therefore, environmental education is considered a continuous pedagogical process.

The principle of systematicity requires that environmental knowledge and skills be studied not as fragmented information but as an interconnected system. Since nature and society are complex systems, environmental problems must be analyzed through cause-and-effect relationships. This approach plays an important role in developing ecological thinking.

The principle of practical orientation ensures a close connection between environmental education and real life. If environmental knowledge is not applied in real situations, it does not yield sustainable results. Therefore, practical forms of activity such as environmental monitoring, project-based work, and nature conservation initiatives are of great importance.

The principle of the unity of local and global issues requires considering environmental problems at two levels—local and global. For example, water scarcity or air pollution may be specific to a certain region, but their causes and consequences are closely linked to global processes. Therefore, environmental education analyzes local experience in integration with global processes.

The principle of interdisciplinary integration предполагает linking environmental education with biology, geography, chemistry, economics, law, and social sciences. Since environmental problems have a complex nature, they cannot be fully explained within the framework of a single discipline. Interdisciplinary integration ensures a holistic and in-depth understanding of environmental knowledge.

In conclusion, the theoretical foundations for forming ecological culture in an inclusive educational environment can be interpreted as a comprehensive approach aimed at harmoniously developing an individual's knowledge, values, emotional-reflective state, and practical activity. Inclusivity enriches this process by incorporating factors such as equal opportunities, adaptation, and social integration, thereby transforming ecological culture into a universal, equitable, and sustainable educational system for all learners.

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