ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКІ ЦІННОСТІ В УКРАЇНСЬКІЙ ОСВІТІ: ВИКЛИКИ ТА ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ

EUROPEAN VALUES IN UKRAINIAN EDUCATION: CHALLENGES AND FRONTIERS

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With Ukraine's European future at stake, educational institutions step forth as powerful agents of change in terms of European Values promotion. By focusing on European Values' role as an all-encompassing groundbreaking framework for national education reform, we treat this concept first and foremost as values in action – be it teaching, studying, policy making, quality assurance procedures, academic process management, student government or intellectual product design.

Колективна монографія, видана за підсумками Міжнародної на-уково-практичної конференції «Європейські цінності в українській освіті» (м. Запоріжжя, 2021), презентує історії успіху й кращі практики впровадження ціннісно-орієнтованих підходів у середній і вищій школі, а також міждисциплінарні і крос-секторальні теоретичні розвідки, виконані у тому числі в рамках проєктів програми Еразмус+.

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Intercultural Awareness
as One of the Learning Outcomes under
Internationalization of Higher Education

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Abstract

Intercultural awareness has gradually become under the research focus of the educators and scholars as one of the desirable learning outcomes of the internationalization of higher education. Intercultural awareness can be viewed as the cognitive ability to understand oneself and others in a modern interconnected world, also as the ability to communicate successfully with representatives of other cultures using one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Nevertheless, this aspect of the intercultural dimension of internationalization efforts of higher education is somewhat neglected, but how can it be achieved? This paper aims to explore this question through content analysis of the available international research and offer insights on how to tackle the major challenges of developing intercultural awareness in students. The author suggests looking at the variety of definitions and various interpretations of intercultural awareness through studies of international scholarship and official documents of the influential international organizations. It is attempted to emphasize the importance of intercultural awareness and to understand the effective strategies of developing IA in students. The author also assumes that the development of intercultural awareness should be highlighted as one of the meaningful learning outcomes of higher education through internationalization policies and practices.

Keywords: higher education, internationalization, intercultural awareness, intercultural learning, learning outcome

Introduction

Internationalization has become a maximum for higher education across the world. Under these conditions, there is growing emphasis on intercultural learning and how students embrace intercultural awareness, which can be described as one of the most important educational objectives and learning outcomes and an umbrella term including certain knowledge, skill, and attitudes. Pike and Selby (1988) offered a more detailed and comprehensive taxonomy of educational objectives, which they consider essential in preparing students for a world of increased global interdependence and interaction. Intercultural awareness (IA) begins with an awareness of oneself and one's own culture; this implies an awareness of the role of the self in interaction and the ability to learn from the interaction.

Both scholarly literature and common understanding of intercultural awareness often refer to this concept in a broader, sometimes vague sense. In this research, we envisage looking at IA as a relevant learning outcome of higher education. IA, in a broader sense, implies that through knowledge, skills and competences, we become aware of what it means to be different from each other, and how through empathy, tolerance and inclusion we can be able to engage meaningfully with each other. IA also enables inclusion, tolerance and empathy as well as intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding among the representatives of different cultures.

At the outset, it should be referred to "awareness" itself, which appeared almost half a century ago in the works of the interculturalists (Stevens 1971, Gattegno 1976 and others) who considered awareness (of self and others) as the keystone on which effective and appropriate interactions depend. Awareness is in and of the "self" and it is always about the self in relation to someone or something else. It is reflective and introspective. In turn, it can be optionally expressed or manifested both to the self and to others. Awareness is difficult to reverse; that is, once one becomes aware, it is difficult to return to a state of unawareness (and even though one may try to deceive oneself, the self knows of the deception). Awareness leads to deeper cognition, skills, and attitudes just as it is also enhanced by their development. It is pivotal to cross-cultural entry and to acceptance by members of other cultures on their terms and for this reason, it has a role in most cross-cultural orientation models (Fantini, 1994). Awareness development, directly or indirectly, affects cultural and intercultural awareness.

In fact, the terms cultural and intercultural awareness are all found in the literature, inevitably given the variety of disciplines interested in the concept, such as cross-cultural psychology, anthropology, socio-linguistics, intercultural communication and education, business studies, cultural studies. Each discipline studies and conceptualizes the term in the realm of different definitions and meanings, but it will be appropriate here to clarify the difference between the terms cultural awareness and intercultural awareness.

One of the world-known interculturalists, British scholar Michael Byram (1997, 2012), uses the term to stress the need for a reflective and analytical stance towards one's culture to appreciate the other's meanings, beliefs, behaviors, and ways in which they have been formed. According to Byram (2000) cultural awareness is a more general, non-technical term. Based on this assumption McKay (2002) states that mere knowledge about a culture is insufficient for gaining insight into intercultural encounters, rather it fills a gap in foreign language learning as it focuses on a successful interaction between people of different cultural backgrounds.

While there is general agreement in the literature on the need to include an intercultural awareness within the internationalization of teaching and learning

there is little development in this literature, either theory or practice; thus the aim of the article is to seek the connection between the internationalization agenda in higher education and IA as one of the learning outcomes.

Methods

To gain insight on how IA is conceptualized, I looked through the definitions of IA invented by different international scholars within different contexts, in terms of personal and social phenomenon. The content analysis was applied to allow the researcher to read and analyze large numbers of texts and identify trends and patterns at an individual, institutional, or social level (Krippendorff, 2012). In addition, content analysis provides descriptions, analyses and potential solutions to problems related to the case in hand, making it possible to discuss events from a relativistic cultural prospective (Horntvedt & Fougner, 2015). The nature of the trends and patterns searched for and identified depend on the topic of that particular

research. In this research, I was looking at the results related to the obtaining and enhancing of intercultural awareness as a learning outcome in the context of internationalization of higher education.

Literature review

The American scholar Milton Bennet in 1980s created the model of developments of intercultural sensitivity. The main concept behind Bennett's model is what he calls «awareness», that is, how one develops the capacity to recognize and live with diversity. «Awareness» refers to two phenomena: the first is that people perceive one thing in different ways; and others, that «cultures differ from one another in the way they maintain different patterns of differentiation, that is, worldviews.» This second aspect relates to Bennett's view of culture as a way for people to interpret reality and for someone to view the world around them. This interpretation of reality, or worldview, is different from culture to culture (Bennet, 1986).

Killick (2005) identified that: "the awareness of self in relation to the 'other', the ability to communicate effectively across cultures, and the confidence to challenge one's own values and those of others responsibly and ethically, are all aspects of what is meant by intercultural awareness and communication skills in a cross-cultural capability context".

Rong Zhang & Dennis C. McCornac (2007) approached IA in the following way: "A general definition is a willingness and ability to realize the need for social changes within an international context, as well as to understand the increasing connectivity between different cultural groups. Ideally, this increasing connectivity will be seen as an uneven process of development upon which further efforts to improve the situation will need to be undertaken in order to ensure a more globalized social community. Intercultural awareness is necessary in order to achieve competence in intercultural relations".

A group of the authors coined another definition: «Intercultural awareness is the ability to empathize and to decentre. More specifically, in a communication situation, it is the ability to take on the perspective of a conversational partner from another culture or with another nationality, and of their cultural background and thus, to be able to understand and take into consideration interlocutors' different perspectives simultaneously" (Korzilius, Hooft and Planken, 2007).

Chen (2007) argues that IA is: "…the cognitive aspect of intercultural communication" and refers to "…the understanding of cultural conventions that affect how people think and behave."

Kramsch (2009) in his research came to the conclusion that: "… intercultural awareness is not merely a skill, but a collection of skills and attitudes better thought of as a competence. It is not just a simple knowledge base, a body of knowledge, but a set of practices involving knowledge, skills and attitudes".

Baker (2011) suggested that: «intercultural awareness from a global perspective is defined as follows: intercultural awareness is a conscious understanding of the role culturally based forms, practices, and frames of understanding can have in intercultural communication, and an ability to put these conceptions into practice in a flexible and content-specific manner in real-time communication».

Another opinion developed within the international co-authorship reads: "Awareness is enhanced by developments in areas of knowledge, attitudes, and skills, and, in turn, furthers their development. Awareness differs from knowledge in that it always involves the self vis-à-vis all else in the world (other things, other people, other thoughts, etc.) and ultimately help clarify what is deepest and most relevant to one's identity" (Fantini & Ruks, 2016).

To consider IA as a system of values was suggested by Baccin & Pavan (2014): "The intercultural awareness develops as the system of values, beliefs, attitudes, variations inside a community, the consideration of the individual as a representative of his/her uniqueness inside a community, the way language and culture contribute to the creation of meanings" (Baccin & Pavan, 2014, p.11). The authors continue: "intercultural awareness, a process through which it is possible to provide and acquire the multiple perspectives necessary to understand and interpret reality that, as we have stated, is multicultural. Such a process implies the ability to decenter and the willingness to consider and understand others' points of view which, beyond the acquisition of second and foreign languages, will lead to a dynamic approach to culture…. Intercultural awareness is a skill that has to be developed within an ongoing process, it is not a fixed objective to be considered separately, apart, on its own, and the process we suggest is that of observation, analysis and comparison; the activities

proposed give practical examples of how such a process might be carried out in class" (Baccin & Pavan, 2014, p. p15-16). Conceptually IA implies also ethical relativism, critical self-reflection (Fisher-Yoshida, 2005), openness towards a potential change, suspending judgment, reframing meanings, curiosity and self-decentralization (Byram, 1997, Deardorff, 2006).

The majority of scholars and practitioners so far have viewed IA as an integral part of foreign language development (Byram & Fleming 1998, Corbett 2003), which was to some extent legitimized by the Council of Europe in 2001: "The linguistic and cultural competences in respect of each language are modified by knowledge of the other and contribute to intercultural awareness, skills and know-how. They enable the individual to develop an enriched, more complex personality and an enhanced capacity for further language learning and greater openness to new cultural experiences" (Council of Europe 2001).

In the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2001) it was pointed out that "intercultural awareness includes an awareness of regional and social diversity in … [the 'world of origin' and the 'world of the target community']" (CEFR, 2001, p.103). It was argued that "intercultural skills and know-how" include:

• the ability to bring the culture of origin and the foreign culture into relation with each other;

• cultural sensitivity and the ability to identify and use a variety of strategies for contact with those from other cultures;

• the capacity to fulfill the role of cultural intermediary between one's own culture and the foreign culture and to deal effectively with intercultural misunderstanding and conflict situations;

• the ability to overcome stereotyped relationships.

To this one might add:

• critical cultural awareness: personal engagement in understanding oneself and others and being conscious of the ethical and moral basis on which judgments are made;

• multiperspectivity: the capacity to see things from more than one point of view (CEFR, 2001, p.104).

The international organizations (Council of Europe, 2008; Council of the European Union, 2008; UNESCO, 2013) in their documents, stated that one possible way to manage and, prevent intercultural conflicts could be

to encourage the development of intercultural awareness among citizens. This growing interest towards IA as a learning outcome on is for example demonstrated in the documents of such influential international organizations as within the general trend of "rethinking education" and the need in providing graduates not only with employable skills, but also transferable skills, due to the necessity for university graduates to be more flexible in a changing global contexts.

Nowadays, it can be stated that the relevance of IA as one of the university graduates' learning outcomes caused a growing interest not only among educators and policy-makers but also among employers, and labor market in general. Today, the employers expect the workforce can think globally. Furthermore, this becomes the tendency in any country across the world. To think globally means recognizing the cultural differences and being capable of being open to international perspectives. Such an awareness can pave the way for more creative and productive collaboration when working across cultures. Teichler (1999) listed a range of general and specific graduate attributes, emphasizing the need for graduates to develop both an "understanding of various cultures" as well as "generic skills which cut across specific disciplines." IA goes along in line with this concept of "intercultural" which has a significant correlation with the idea of interaction, an action between two or more poles (individuals or groups) (Baiutti, 2016). As Portera (2008) states "there is a game, an 'interaction', between people with different ethnic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds in which the aim is not assimilation or fusion, but encounter, communication, dialogue, contact, in which roles and limits are clear, but the end is open".

The analyzed literature does not provide a fixed clear definition of IA. The scholars emphasize on the complexity of the concept and its poly-semantic character. In their trial to define the meaning of IA, they underline its continuality and complexity. IA is said to be developed and enhanced by knowledge, comprehension and skills. Knowledge comprises self-awareness; meanwhile, skills cover the ability to listen, interpret, analyze, evaluate, and relate to cultural differences and similarities.

Discussion

The concept of IA implies a process of mutual exchange where each person acknowledges the other and is acknowledged by the other, a con-

sequence of an interaction between people who have different cultural backgrounds. Though, this interaction might be problematical, therefore, awareness of cultural backgrounds and intercultural nuances is required in order to facilitate this interaction.

The inquiry whether the internationalized university helps build IA has appeared recently at the agenda in higher education. How relevant is this concept to the higher education institutions strategies and policies? Does it meet societal needs, including long-term interests of students, academia and society? Is it the challenge for higher education system to promote development of IA of the graduates and by this helping them to live and work in modern interconnected world? These are the questions to address theoretically and realized in practice.

Today, educational institutions can create and introduce to the curriculum suitable programs, activities, and experiences that allow students to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to live and work in heterogeneous and interconnected societies. Implementing intercultural education through internationalization practices enables universities to deal with academic multicultural diversity positively and to see the advantages of all the possibilities and richness that a diverse classroom offers to students as learners and to teachers. Nowadays, university classrooms are multicultural, even where there are no students from minority ethnic backgrounds. Students have different cultures. Their backgrounds differ in terms of earlier education, religion, socio- economic status, household and family form. Additionally, they differ in values and attitudes, lifestyles, abilities/disabilities, and ethnicity or nationality. Therefore, ethnicity or nationality is only one of the factors that make our classrooms diverse and thus influence our student's culture. Mattia Baiutti (2016) cited Portera (2011): "Intercultural and international education, which has gradually become more crucial and urgent, is currently understood as "the most appropriate response to the challenges of globalization and complexity". It is revealing to see how the terminology used to describe the international dimension of higher education has evolved over the past decades. Higher education systems capitalize on the internationalization trend by promoting outcomes and opportunities for fostering international connections that can increase global and cultural awareness as well as intercultural communication effectiveness necessary for today's global citizens

and tomorrow's workforce (Pitts & Brooks, 2016). Knight and de Witt (2018) emphasize, that "internationalization of higher education has become a very broad and varied concept, including many new rationales, approaches and strategies in different and constantly changing contexts. For the most part, international programmes have remained unchecked or unmonitored by policymakers and administration who may assume that internationalizing the university will enhance students' cultural awareness or foster global citizenship (Peacock and Harrison, 2009). Framing internationalization as a dialectical process of becoming places the journey, and not the destination, in the foreground (Gesche and Makeham, 2008) and allows us to move beyond traditional disciplinary perspectives on pedagogy and learning (Leask, 2015), and beyond the dichotomous us-other thinking that pervades intercultural interactions (Martin and Nakayama, 2011), into a more transformative space (Pitts & Brooks, 2016). Thus, beyond exposure students must also be guided through a process of self- and cultural awareness. This can be accomplished, for example, through a well elaborated institutional policies and well elaborated university studies where students can develop their cultural awareness and build intercultural communication skills through learning and application. Students can be motivated to reflect on their experience that reveals their own cultural identity, cultural expectations, and similarity, difference, and/or power assumptions. According to this and simply put it, faculty must learn to recognize that beyond the more pragmatic and financial goals of administration, internationalization has value in and of itself (Stohl, 2007).

Conclusion

Intercultural awareness is not an easy concept to perceive. It is polysemantic and has many definitions and interpretations. In most cases scholars and practitioners connect IA with learning foreign languages, in other words with intercultural communication competence. IA is often referred to as a cognitive ability that allows one to be open to cultural diversity and accept cultural differences.

In this research it was not pursued to find the most comprehensive definition of IA, but to provide the generalized groundwork for further research of IA as a complex phenomenon. Clarity in regards to IA could help in many ways. On the other hand, the more definitions, interpretations,

domains are elaborated the more spheres of application and education programs to foster IA can be designed. Similarly, better understanding IA can better equip educators with the methods and instruments to achieve the learning objectives and outcomes and guarantee the learners' development and growth.

In the research, it was argued that IA can be considered one of the most valuable learning outcomes of higher education, namely of the institutional internationalization practices. IA can be seen as one of many soft skills that can appropriately form the basis of modern educational programs. The higher education system is entitled to equip students with the knowledge and skills that will enable them to gain greater awareness of their own cultural values and intercultural issues and develop a working knowledge of life in the country or countries in which they intend to live and work. It is also a matter of how to integrate these aspects of the curriculum as a matter of routine teaching and learning practice, drawing on and raising awareness of, the fact that both learners' and teachers' are themselves reflexively engaged with languages, cultures and in ongoing learning in their own lives, and, together, in relation to 'internationalisation' (Crichton & Scarino, 2007).

From this position, internationalization of higher education can be viewed as a wide-ranging process that is ideally situated for developing IA of the graduates. There are evident stimulating factors for such a commitment:

• an environment of the interconnected, globalized world which needs citizens which are capable to live together

• a societal need for a comprehensive understanding of cultural diversity among all citizens and cultivation of intercultural dialogue, which should be supported by quality education, a strong media sector and adequate knowledge dissemination

• a conceptual reflection of IA in higher education and introducing it academic communities through theory and practice

• an encouraging institutional policy, including the internationalization of higher education with clear and specific priorities towards IA

• a multilevel, all-encompassing approach to develop and nurture the practices on development of IA.

The key implication of this way of understanding IA for teaching and

learning is that in particular internationalization of the curriculum is not only a matter of what content, materials, skills, tasks or other items to add to or 'include'. It is also a matter of how to integrate these aspects of the curriculum as a matter of routine teaching and learning practice, drawing on, and raising awareness of, the fact that both learners' and teachers' are themselves reflexively engaged with languages, cultures and in ongoing learning in their own lives, and, together, in relation to 'internationalisation' (Crichton and Scarino, 2007).

Educating for IA through the internationalization efforts in higher education would create and nurture the conditions in which both the knowledge and understanding of different ways of life may lead to the development of IA, as a set of competences and skills to be developed in a life-long ongoing process.

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