

Cross-cultural competence formation for future teachers in integration processes

Formación en competencias transculturales para futuros docentes en procesos de integración

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the improvement of cross-cultural competence for future teachers. The study aims to develop directions and tools for the cross-cultural competence of teachers at different levels of organization and regulation of teaching education in the conditions of integrative processes.

The study's central hypothesis is that cross-cultural competence cannot be formed by implementing educational programs and requires an integrated approach at all levels of

the pedagogical process. The relevance of the methods and tools for the cross-cultural competence formation of the future teacher in the conditions of integration processes is determined by three factors: transformation of the labor market, aggravation of intercultural perception problems in the world, insufficient amount of scientific research on this topic.

The research methods are used: analysis, synthesis, systematization, comparison, induction, and deduction. The study results allowed to form recommendations for the cross-cultural competence development of the future teacher at the individual, teaching, institutional and regulatory levels. The main content of the recommendations is the possibility of organizing practical communication experiences between students of different nationalities. The study's practical significance consists in the possibility of its use in the educational programs of pedagogical institutions of higher education.

Keywords: cross-cultural competence, integration processes, pedagogy, higher education institutions.

Resumen

El artículo está dedicado a la mejora de la competencia intercultural para futuros profesores. El estudio tiene como objetivo desarrollar direcciones y herramientas para la competencia intercultural de los profesores en los diferentes niveles de organización y regulación de la formación docente en las condiciones de los procesos integradores.

La hipótesis central del estudio es que la competencia intercultural no puede formarse mediante la implementación de programas educativos y requiere un enfoque integrado en todos los niveles del proceso pedagógico. La pertinencia de los métodos y herramientas para la formación de competencias interculturales del futuro docente en las condiciones de los procesos de integración está determinada por tres factores: transformación del mercado laboral, agravamiento de los problemas de percepción intercultural en el mundo, cantidad insuficiente de investigaciones científicas sobre este tema.

Se utilizan los métodos de investigación: análisis, síntesis, sistematización, comparación, inducción y deducción. Los resultados del estudio permitieron formar recomendaciones para el desarrollo de competencias transculturales del futuro docente a nivel individual, docente, institucional y normativo. El contenido principal de las recomendaciones es la posibilidad de organizar experiencias prácticas de comunicación entre estudiantes de diferentes nacionalidades. El significado práctico del estudio consiste en la posibilidad de su uso en los programas educativos de las instituciones pedagógicas de educación superior.

Palabras clave: competencia intercultural, procesos de integración, pedagogía, instituciones de educación superior.

1. Introduction

The relevance of the methods and tools formation of the intercultural competence of the future teacher in the conditions of integration processes is caused by three factors:

The labor market transformation in the conditions of globalization, where intercultural competence becomes one of the specialists' most critical soft skills.

The growing problems associated with geopolitical division, where in the conditions of global crisis, it is important to preserve human values and adequately respond to intercultural and international relations issues.

Insufficiently covered in scientific approaches to forming cross-cultural competence of future teachers in individual, online, or distance learning conditions.

According to recent sociological research by the Future Institute (Davies et al., 2020) and numerous academic studies (Klafegn, 2017; Elphinstone, 2018), professionals' cross-cultural competence is one of the most demanded in today's labor market. It is due to the overall social integration processes, which are caused by rapid social and economic globalization (Rettig, 2017).

The problem of intercultural communication has been relevant for quite a long time, especially in the United States and other democracies, where the issue is escalated by racism and intolerance of national and other minorities (Mori, 2021). It is especially true in Ukraine and Russia, which have become direct participants in a war conflict called the war for democratic values in society. On the part of the Russian authorities, there has been propaganda of ethnophile and racist doctrine about the "Russian world" for decades. On March 15, 2022, the Declaration of the "Russian world" was promulgated, and signed by over a thousand Orthodox theologians (Metropolitan Epiphanius, 2022), blessing the military aims of the destruction of Ukrainians as a nation. Today, the world is concerned about the military confrontation between Russia and Ukraine. In particular, democratic society is taking Ukraine's side, putting pressure on the Russian government, and applying discriminatory measures against Russians in response to military aggression against the Ukrainian nation (Ray, 2022; Lika, 2022). Under such conditions, the problem of building communication at the international level is exacerbated (Lika, 2022).

Therefore, participants of negotiations should understand not only the current political and social situation in the countries but also their history, culture, religion, and preconditions of the conflict. They also should understand the current feelings of citizens, which as a result, will allow for choosing the right words during speeches, negotiations, and decisions at the international level.

All of these global economic and political processes are conducted by professionals who are trained and educated accordingly. Therefore, teachers, lecturers, consultants, and

tutors have an essential place in such professionals' training in international communication processes (Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Many companies are creating platforms for education and professional development in various fields. Traditional educational institutions, such as schools and universities, also turn to distance learning technologies. At the same time, the lecture developers need to consider the intercultural features of communication between the teacher and the student since representatives can form the audience from dozens of countries. In the communication process, it is important not to touch on issues that make the perception of information uncomfortable.

Thus, today's teachers must be well-rounded, tolerant, unbiased individuals. They must stand outside of socio-cultural conflicts and confrontations and clearly understand the importance of educating proactive professionals who respect the speaker and listen to him, but at the same time are not afraid to show their cultural and national characteristics and defend their interests.

The study aims to develop tools and directions for cross-cultural competence forming at different educational levels under integrative processes.

The study's central hypothesis is that cross-cultural competencies cannot be formed by implementing educational programs but require an integrated approach at all levels of the pedagogical process.

To achieve the goal, the following tasks will be carried out in the course of the study:

- to carry out a critical review of the literature in the field of study to identify key problems related to cross-cultural competencies;
- to propose practical directions for solving critical problems related to cross-cultural competencies that can be adapted to the formal education environment;
- to consider discussion points and formation of cross-cultural competencies in future educators, taking into account their activities in an integrative society.

2. Literature Review

Intercultural competencies are widely researched in academic circles. However, they are defined differently by different researchers, depending on the purpose of applying these competencies. For example, the concept of fostering multicultural, poly-cultural, and intercultural competence is widely researched, which has differences between themselves at the theoretical level, but at the practical level of pedagogy, these issues are solved by the same methods. Issues of multicultural competence in the pedagogical process have been widely researched in the scientific literature since the 1990s (Chisholm, 1994; Davidman & Davidman, 1994; Gollnik & Chinn, 1990; Giroux, 1994; Taylor, 1994).

Regarding cross-cultural competence, this concept has been more explored not from a pedagogical perspective but from the standpoint of building a future professional's skill. In particular, Klafegn J. (2017), in his study, notes that the skill of cross-cultural competence is one of the most important in the 21st century for employers - large multinational companies, which is a characteristic of integration processes and globalization of the economy. Furthermore, Elphinstone L. (2018), in his study, also emphasizes the importance of cross-cultural competence in a global society in the context of integrative processes.

The peculiarity of Klafegn J.'s (2017) research is that cross-cultural competence cannot be manifested among people who take a job. It is verified only during their direct activity because cross-cultural competence combines numerous components that cannot be covered in the employee's interview process.

Filmer & Herbig (2018) show their study's relevance to developing cross-cultural competence. They offer the importance of competence for future professionals who constantly work with a multicultural range of users - healthcare professionals (Huddart et al., 2020; Han et al., 2014). At the same time, the scientific significance of the study lies in the systematization of methods for the development of multicultural competence, described in the scientific literature by 34 researchers. During the study, the authors show that it is impossible to isolate multicultural competence using interviewing because, in this process, people meet moral standards without taking into account real situations that can completely change the rapid response, behavior, and attitude towards the interlocutor in a multicultural environment.

In contrast to Filmer & Herbig (2018), Elphinstone L. (2018), in her study, notes that the primary identifier of cross-cultural competence is the cultural intelligence factor (CQ). Unfortunately, this indicator is difficult to identify with specific competency sets for psychologists. Still, the Cultural Intelligence Indicator model creates the potential for future research in this area and allows for a foundation of focus on specific pedagogical practices.

McAllister & Irvine (2000) confirm the idea of the impossibility of quickly identifying cross-cultural competence. In their study, the authors show that pedagogical professionals use different methods to influence teachers in multicultural education. However, such one-time interventions do not produce unambiguous results because they focus on the content rather than the intercultural communication process itself.

Overall, we can conclude from the reviewed literature that intercultural competence is the process of a person's entry into another culture through learning about its characteristics and developing their own culture. In turn, a teacher's intercultural competence consists of creating conditions for students in which opportunities for self-realization in the intercultural world are created, which contributes to a conflict-free identification of a person in a multicultural space within the integration processes.

3. Research Methods

The novelty of the research is formed by the systematization of scientific and pedagogical methods of cross-cultural competence formation for specialists, taking into account integrative processes obtained by critical analysis of scientific literature, systematization of research results, and search for common features and differences.

With the application of comparison methods of foreign approaches and synthesis of information, the hypothesis based on the need for an integrated approach to the introduction of development cross-cultural competence directions among students was obtained. Furthermore, by classifying educational measures of educational process regulation, a four-level approach to forming cross-cultural competence among professionals is proposed: individual or student level, teaching level, institutional level, and regulator level.

Each level has equal importance in the formation of students' cross-cultural competence. The proposal's value is confirmed by the international experience of developing cross-cultural competence among future teachers in developed countries, as well as the lack of practical, effective mechanisms for developing cross-cultural communication skills in the pedagogical process of higher educational institutions in Ukraine.

In the conditions of integration processes, globalization development, and computer technologies, the main recommendations for the formation of cross-cultural skills are based on the stimulation of practical communication between representatives of different countries through the Internet through video conferences or other formats. As for Ukraine, its integration into the European Union allows for improving the cross-cultural qualities of specialists by stimulating educational and non-educational tourism.

4. Results

According to the results of the studied literature, it is possible to understand that the problem of cross-cultural education for future teachers cannot be solved only by introducing specific disciplines or lectures in the educational processes. The cross-cultural competence of students and future teachers is brought up to a greater extent by stimulating their active interaction with the world. So it is necessary to create such conditions in which the competence will be obtained naturally and, therefore, will effectively manifest in the process of further labor activity.

The development of cross-cultural competence takes place at four levels, as reflected in Fig.1.

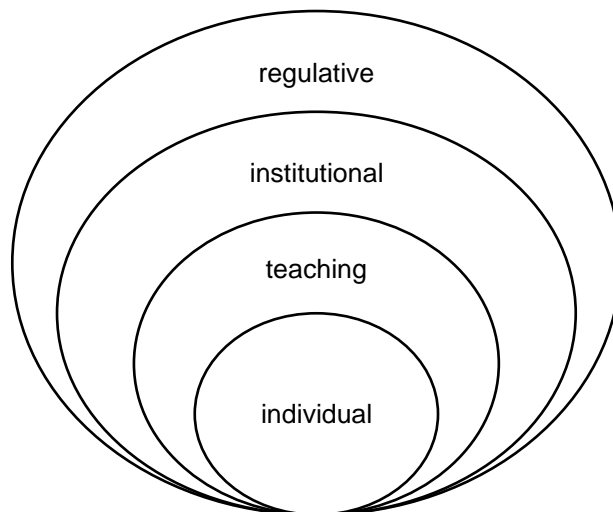


Figure 1. Cross-cultural competence development levels of future teacher.

Note: compiled by the author

Let us consider the main ways and techniques used to develop future teachers' cross-cultural competence at all levels.

Individual level. In the conditions of integrative educational and socio-economic processes, it is becoming easier to obtain cross-cultural skills. The main tools for acquiring such a skill are the Internet and traveling. But every interaction in society begins with learning a foreign language that allows communication, in which features of the culture and worldview of the interlocutors are obtained. Therefore, each student should set several goals for improving their knowledge of a foreign language and practicing communication in a cross-cultural environment. A person striving to develop cross-cultural competence should be socially active and find ways to live communication with people from other countries under different pretexts. It allows becoming comfortable in communicating with representatives of other nationalities and, therefore, without fear, prejudice, or stereotypes to dialogue and absorb the features of their speech, behavior, attitudes, and worldview. Traveling to different countries is another effective way to develop cross-cultural competence, as it allows you to create an openness to all information. Moreover, being in a foreign-language environment, an individual instinctively adapts to the new environment by observing the actions of the local population, thereby learning the peculiarities of the worldview of other cultures. Within the learning environment, it is essential to participate in scientific and practical international conferences, do volunteer work and receive volunteers from other countries, and help organize the life of students. It is not unreasonable to prepare for such communication in advance by studying the peculiarities of the current life, history, and culture of the interlocutor's country. Today the Internet offers short answers to questions you need to know when communicating with representatives of different countries.

Teaching level. It is essential for a teacher who develops methods for building cross-cultural competencies to self-improve them. The teaching profession offers many perspectives to expand the possibility of cross-cultural perception. In particular, a teacher can work with an audience formed by representatives of different cultures, allowing the practice to adapt to the specifics of the culture and world perception of students from different countries. Students often lack sufficiently developed cross-cultural competencies, so they are afraid of foreigners and do not know how to start a conversation and make friends with them. In such a case, the instructor's function is to accelerate the students' acquaintance, allowing them to overcome the barrier of uncertainty quickly. To form cross-cultural teaching skills, individual cross-cultural skills described above should be developed in oneself. Still, additionally the responsibility to organize the formation of such skills among students should be taken. To this end, techniques and methods are created to develop cross-cultural communication. These include reading books, watching movies, studying history, communicating on social networks, etc. To perfect the acquired knowledge in practice, the instructor can initiate students to participate in international scientific conferences, student exchange programs, experience, etc. Therefore, it is important to have constant sources of information about the availability of clubs, discussions, and events with representatives of the international community and to prepare students for them within the program of formation of cross-cultural competencies. The primary tool of daily practical training remains the Internet, which is available in almost every institution of higher education. Therefore, the organization of online conferences, marathons, meetings, or regular communications allows to instill in students the liberty and courage to communicate with representatives of different nations.

Institutional level. Each student in higher education is at their level of multicultural development. At the same time, a higher level of action is always associated with non-racist behavior and the desire to gain profound knowledge about other cultures and nations. Thus, student teachers always begin their own cross-cultural development within university doors at different levels; therefore, identical programs cannot be applied to everyone. To introduce cross-cultural education tools and methods into higher teacher education programs, it is necessary to prepare students for this information so that the level of cross-cultural perception of the world will be about the same. To begin to concretely enhance cross-cultural communication through the study of culture, history, and foreign languages, all students should be attuned to the perception of such information, preparatory activities in which students learn how to interact in an online environment and not be afraid to communicate with representatives of other countries in a foreign language. Educational activities aimed at developing such skills should be initiated, organized, and provided at the institution level.

Regulatory level. The introduction of effective methods of cross-cultural education for the student is impossible without financial support and changes in the regulation of secondary and higher education. State regulators of education should reorient educational programs to the needs of the global economy, which implies training specialists with developed

cross-cultural competencies. To implement such programs, it is necessary to take care of the financial, technical, and technological support of educational institutions and establish international cooperation with representatives of different countries so that theoretical methods of cross-cultural competence formation can be tested in practice.

Let us summarize the research by drawing up practical recommendations for forming cross-cultural competencies among future teachers in an integrative environment.

Table 1.
Practical directions of cross-cultural competence formation among future teachers.

Level	Practical Recommendations
Individual	Study of foreign languages Studying the culture and history of countries representatives of communicative processes Travel, gaining practical experience of interaction with representatives of different countries Brief preparation for communicative processes with representatives of different countries Participation in scientific conferences, student exchange programs, volunteer projects
Teaching	Expediting the acquaintance of students from different countries and decreasing the communication barrier Organization of cross-cultural communication practices through the Internet Organization of practice of live communication with representatives of different countries Organization of case studies in which students from different countries have to cooperate. Student exchange programs with other countries Organizing additional language courses for instructors and students. Organization of international online conferences or international free-lance conferences with representatives from different countries.
Institutional	Student exchange programs with other countries Organizing additional language courses for instructors and students. Organization of international online conferences or international free-lance conferences with representatives from different countries. Organizing volunteer programs to teach a foreign language or culture Creating faculty exchange programs with universities in other countries Organization of joint educational projects of international level Organization of admission rules for foreign students and development of methods for their adaptation to the current environment Organization of techno-technological capability of free international communication within the classroom
Regulatory	Financial support of the technical-technological development of cross-cultural student-faculty interaction Initiation of international cooperation in the exchange of pedagogical experience Preparation of appropriate legal and regulatory support for the possibility of forming flexible cross-cultural skills programs Formation of policies to stimulate foreign language learning

5. Discussions

Functional areas of cross-cultural competence development among teachers have been the subject of research by many scholars. In particular, at Midwestern University in the United States, teachers Seeberg, V. and Minick, T. (2012) developed a program for cross-cultural competence development among students. The study's authors identify a list of knowledge teachers working in the context of globalization and integrative processes should have. This knowledge in pedagogical practice is obtained mainly by cognitive methods and abstract approaches, and they have no practical training, tools, or techniques (Cushner & Brennan, 2007, p. 3). The authors point out that cross-cultural competence cannot be achieved by learning specific disciplines in a class or group. It requires active engagement with the world (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011; Sperandio, Grudzinski-Hall & Stewart-Gambino, 2010). However, accumulated experience has made it possible to create and put into pedagogical practice methods based on socio-historical, socio-cultural knowledge and peculiarities of integrative processes in the world. Cross-cultural education involves intellectual exercises based not on tasks but situational problems with practical pedagogical solutions.

A practical methodology for building cross-cultural skills was shown by Seeberg, V. and Minick, T. (2012) as an example of addressing the issue of interaction between students of different races. Most of the students of these educators come from middle-class families. So, more often, the children grew up in an isolated environment among the community of white people and could not have a high level of cross-cultural competence. Practical work on developing these competencies continued for several semesters and was based on the organization of communications via the Internet, particularly videoconferences. The whole program of communication development had ten sections distributed for the entire period of pedagogical education. The system of competence evaluation created a unique problem. For this reason, CCC (cross-cultural competence) standard was created; it was based on the following factors:

- flexibility of the interlocutor, the ability to deviate from their stereotypes;
- emotionality - the ability to form valuable emotions for communication;
- stability - the ability to defend their point of view, regardless of the beliefs of other nation representatives;
- openness - readiness to receive new information.

In turn, the pedagogical practice of developing countries, particularly Ukraine, today is based on the formation of student development programs as part of the study programs of special subjects. They also must develop communication skills using a foreign language, social and labor development by modeling the interaction between representatives of different countries in different situations. Denisenko (2007) believes that cross-cultural competencies are developed by doing different exercises, studying history and cultural studies, improving foreign language knowledge, and self-development.

Other authors highlight the importance of reading books in developing cross-cultural competence (Nunan, 1999; Widdowson, 2003), studying the features of communication through films in a foreign language, communication in social networks (Skarlet, 2020), live communication (Khomich, 2014), studying nonverbal features of communication, education of humanity and tolerance (Mori, 2021).

6. Conclusion

The literature analysis shows that implementing cross-cultural education methods in educational processes is real, and they are effectively used both in schools and institutions of higher education. However, it is impossible to assess the level of cross-cultural education using standard educational methods, just as it is impossible to measure the level of cross-cultural competence in future professionals during interviews. This skill has a hidden, profoundly psychological content and should be acquired not only in traditional education but also in the process of personal formation.

A scientific literature study allows the development of a four-level cross-cultural competence formation model for future teachers: individual, teaching, institutional and regulatory. The primary responsibility for gaining competence lies on the individual, who must independently strive for self-development and knowledge of the world. The main methods of developing competence are studying foreign languages and their practical use in real-life situations. The main tasks of a teacher when developing students' competence are to organize training and create an environment for competence development. The institute's main task is the technical and organizational provision of the possibility of practical formation of cross-cultural competence among students. Finally, the regulator should ensure the flexibility of the educational process and sufficient financial support so that educational institutions within their program can meet the objectives of cross-cultural competence training.

The main points of discussion in the topic study are related to the effectiveness of cross-cultural competence development within higher education programs. At the same time, the international experience of pedagogy indicates that a more effective way to develop this type of competence is to organize live communicative activities between representatives of different nations.

The practical significance of the research lies in the possibility of using the methods and tools of cross-cultural competence development by students, teachers, and educational institutions.

The topic of further research tools is the development of cross-cultural skills that can be used in formal education.

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