Tuuli Mirola (ed.)

CREATING TRULY INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION COMMUNITIES
International week 1.-5.10.2018

FOREWORD

This year the theme for the international week at Saimaa University of Applied Science is *"Creating Truly International Higher Education Communities"*.

Getting together annually with our partner universities provides a platform for innovative ideas and deeper cooperation between institutions and individual members. It is important to meet face to face on a regular basis and to share knowledge also by socializing.

What does "truly international" mean? What are "higher education communities"?

We need international interaction in the field of education to understand our own educational processes. Cross-cultural interaction in higher education is exposing the university teachers and administrators to a variety of educational structures and pedagogical solutions. The other is a mirror, which helps us understand ourselves. Being truly international is daring to challenge one's own beliefs and values.

Community is a group sharing common interests. As an educational community, we are all interested in enhancing learning in higher education. There is no single solution to this, thus we need ongoing dialogue and constant search for new structural and pedagogical answers.

This publication addresses the topic of our International Week from various points of view. By reading these articles, we can learn of different approaches to internationalization in higher education. There are examples of different national educational solutions and joint projects between countries, cooperation within and across fields of education, and interplay between economic, social and educational development. We can also read about experiences of teaching in a multicultural classroom.

Thank you all for your contribution to this publication and participation to the International Week!

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CONTENTS

Internationalization in higher education: a literature review and proposed guidelines

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Abstract

Internationalization constitutes an essential part of the processes of academic institutions worldwide. Universities compete with each other in order to get better positions in world rankings, in following to attract excellent students, and finally to implement large-scale research projects. More generally, internationalization is considered a hot topic in higher education, especially in the last decade. In this paper we will deal with the different fields that influence the integration of internationalization in the academic community, with the aim of suggesting good practices and proposing guidelines for strong partnerships. The rapid development of digital technologies and high-speed networks contributes to the enhancement of internationalization and should be evaluated by the universities. Also, student's as well as teacher's mobility has been one of the most apparent aspects of the internationalization in higher education so far. It has been proved that joint programs hold a key role worldwide in the future of internationalization in higher education. We conclude that internationalization is an important issue of the Higher Education agenda, on both national, European and worldwide level.

Keywords: internationalization, higher education, mobility, joint programs

1 Introduction

In this article we try to investigate the contribution of specific factors to the internationalization in higher education. We provide a report regarding the meaning as well as the definition of this specific term and its updates. Another important aspect introduced is a short description of the various rationales. Internationalization is often confused with globalization, but they have discrete differences. Some guidelines are also provided in order to contribute to the barriers' overcoming and to enable the internationalization in the higher education worldwide.

The method we used to collect and process the data of the present study was based primarily on internet research of databases as well as electronic journals.

More generally, the review of relevant scientific journals is considered to be a major useful analytical tool.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Section 1 presents a brief reference regarding the main subject and the methodology. Section 2 introduces the definition of the concept, while Section 3 briefs about the rationales of internationalization, and particularly the motivations. Section 4 discusses the benefits of student mobility as well as the key role of the European program Erasmus+. Section 5 focuses on the potential applications that new digital technologies could have in terms of the internationalization of higher education. Ultimately, Section 6 examines the importance of joint programs in higher education, whereas Section 7 presents our conclusions.

2   Conceptual Definitions

The subject of internationalization in higher education is considered a complicated issue all around the globe but not a new concept at all. There are many definitions regarding the term internationalization, but the most widely used is the one introduced by Knight in 2008. Jane Knight defines internationalization as a process that confers an international, intercultural or global dimension on the purpose, functions, and deliverables of higher education. Moreover, Knight argues that internationalization can be assumed as a dynamic process and not a series of individual activities, integration or infusion; also it can contribute to the sustainability of the international dimension. The author analyses the institutional bottom-up approach as the university institutions, whereas finally she undertakes and implements internationalization actions. On the other hand, the top-down national approach refers to the funding as well as the institutional frameworks imposed by internationalization at a national-European level.

This definition refers to the primary and universal functions of a higher education institution, such as teaching, research, and service provision in the society (Qiang, 2003).

The European Parliament introduced in 2015 the definition of internationalization in higher education in its relevant study. This complex term has been defined as the deliberate process to integrate an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, features, and provision of higher education, thus aiming to improve the quality of education and research for all students and staff. The ultimate goal is to achieve a real contribution to the society itself (De Wit, Hunter, Howard, Egron-Polak, 2015).

Furthermore, another definition for internationalization is considered the planned process aiming to enhance and improve the quality and performance of higher education institutions. In addition, the nature of internationalization is reinforced as a mean of enhancing the quality of teaching, learning as well as research rather than as a mean of focusing on the financial incentives of institutions (De Wit, 2016).

Altbach & Knight in 2007 stated that the concept of internationalization is often confused with the concept of globalization, while these two terms are completely different but at the same time closely related. More specifically, internationalization refers to strategies and policies of institutions in higher education to be integrated into the global academic network. On the other hand, globalization refers to modern trends in different areas but mainly in terms of the economic field.

3 Rationales of internationalization

The motivation of the internationalization in higher education is mainly economic regarding some academic institutes. As some examples of internationalization, one can consider the need of recruiting international students or developing skills that are important for students' preparation towards the global labor market. Another example is considered the need of knowledge expansion through cross-border partnerships, the creation of academic branches abroad as well as the use of virtual learning through Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) (De Wit, et al., 2015).

However, in a higher education environment, the quality assurance should always be guaranteed (Altbach & Knight, 2007). For the assessment of the quality of internationalization, specific criteria should exist. More to the point, regarding the case of the internationalization of a curriculum, the objectives regarding the learning outcomes sought and the relevance of the teaching methods, should be measured. The composition of the administrative staff involved, their skills, as well as their intercultural experience so as to support internationalization, are also critical criteria as well (Aerden, 2017).

The most powerful internationalization incentives of a university are mainly related to its international physiognomy and worldwide reputation. As additional reasons, the author has considered the improvement of the quality according to the international standards, the progress of the student and academic community, the increase of the revenues, the networking with emphasis on the strategic partnerships, and finally the research and the production knowledge (Knight, 2008).

Academic institutes have serious reasons to invest in various internationalization activities as it is proven that these actions can lead to increased revenue and reputation while providing a competitive edge in their place on the global market (Minola, Donina and Meoli, 2016).

In addition, international cooperation in research and innovation is set as one of the actions' priorities of internationalization undertaken by the academic institutions. However, there is a shift from recruiting international students for short-term economic benefits to recruit more talented international students and scholar researchers for the needs of higher education and industry in research and innovation issues. In particular, at European level, the primary objective is proven to be, as shown by the initiatives of the European Commission, the increase of the number of incoming and outgoing students in the context of developing cooperation and competition between countries and their institutions. (De Wit et al., 2015).

4   Internationalization and mobility

Until recently, mobility has been the most apparent aspect of the internationalization in higher education. Regarding Greece, the coordination of European programs, through which the internationalization of universities takes place, was controlled by the Ministry of Education and Research, as well as several other public services. Nowadays, the European education programs are exclusively organized by the State Scholarships Foundation (IKY).

The goal of internationalization in higher education is achieved through various methods, with one of them being the mobility. This method involves the transfer of students, staff (both administrative and academic), researchers, as well as the mobility of their universities and curricula.

The Erasmus program was considered as the spring of the internationalization activities of universities. European programs, such as Erasmus+, are based on the idea of mobility so as to achieve the goals of internationalization. In particular, Erasmus+ is the European Commission's program for education, training, youth and sport, aiming at strengthening the skills and the employability, as well as modernizing education, training and youth systems in all areas of lifelong learning (Higher Education, Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education, School Education, youth activities, etc.). More specifically, the Erasmus+ program is structured in 3 key actions for education, training, and youth, which are:

1. Mobility (Key Action 1)

2. Cooperation for Innovation and Exchange of Good Practices (Key Action 2)

3. Support for Policy Reform (Key Action 3)

5   Enhancing internationalization with modern digital networks and digital technologies

The rapid development of modern technologies as well as digital networks contributes to the enhancement of internationalization in higher education. This

can be achieved by significantly modifying the communication, learning and interaction environment with the incorporation of the MOOCs, Learning Analytics-LA, Learning Design-LD, and Open Educational Resources (OERs).

Concretely, MOOCs constitute a new way of teaching through the Internet by using new information and communications technologies and can involve a large number of people. This way is characterized entirely by the contribution of creating a globally educated society. In addition, courses of longer or shorter duration are offered worldwide in scientific or social matters and are related to daily life and personal interests of students (Sclater, 2016).

According to Scanlon, McAndrew and O'Shea, (2015), learning analytics refer to measuring, collecting and analyzing data, and in following to generating reports about the general context of the learning. This process aims to understand and optimize the learning process as well as the environment where it occurs.

The term Learning Design refers to two subjects: initially to the actions required for creating the specifications of learning activities and in following to the representation of the overall learning design. The learning design has the major benefit that the design process is made clear through its description (Scanlon et al., 2015).

Finally, one can states the exclusively online and freely accessible documents or audiovisual material, by introducing the term Open Educational Resources (OERs) (Wikipedia, 2016). This term can be used internationally by anyone in terms of teaching or research purposes. Nowadays, the Open Educational Resources repository exists by providing everything that has been mentioned above. In addition, it is maintained by the Open University of England (Scanlon et al., 2015).

6 Internationalization through dual and joint programs

Dual and joint programs appeared in Europe in the mid-1970s so as to improve mobility and match curricula between academic institutions. More to the point, the original model focused on undergraduate studies. Several new and innovative

universities adopted the new model in order to gain reputation and develop more easy collaborations with traditional and non-global partners. Some of the advantages of these programs are graduate employment, income growth and education in the management of programs (Hénard, Diamond and Roseveare, 2012).

The management of a joint program can be further analyzed in the following five major areas, as Delpouve states in 2016:

a) The network of institutions including the policy and strategy adopted to develop and manage the joint programs

b) The management structure and organization of the individual services of the joint programs

c) The program implementation regarding student management, which contains the submission of applications for the final selection as well as the minutes of admission and the award of the titles

d) Continuous quality assurance and program evaluation

e) Financial management including teaching policy as well as issues related to sustainability

The primary objective of the joint programs is the promotion of innovation, excellence and internationalization in higher education. Blakemore and Burquel (2012), after studying several joint projects, identified four high level actions that ensure the building of quality:

1. A realistic strategy for the financial and institutional management

2. The development of the internationalization strategy for the administrative and teaching staff

3. A comprehensive course vision

4. The attraction of excellent students with the aim of delivering high value and engaging alumni

Joint programs are proven to hold a key role worldwide in the future of internationalization in higher education. Of course, many actions must be taken by academic institutions in order to overcome many of the problems that have already occurred. It will definitely take a considerable amount of time and cooperation at national and global level by all stakeholders. (De Wit, 2015).

7 Conclusion

Internationalization constitutes an important issue of the Higher Education agenda, at a national, European and global level. It is linked both to changes in the organization of universities and to the wider political, economic and social changes that have taken place over the last decades worldwide. However, the internationalization in higher education is considered a complex and multidimensional process. Surely there are many barriers to overcome so as to fully achieve the benefits of the cooperation between academic institutes. A commitment of academic and administrative staff is also required in order to develop the required strategy of internationalization of curricula.

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Teaching international students in a zone of comfort

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Abstract

The purpose of the paper is to reveal cultural values' manifestation in educational settings and examine the ways for lecturers to improve the culturally responsive teaching. The paper deals with cross-cultural communication, the attitude to humor, the interpersonal skills and diversity training in the international classroom environment. The teachers are supposed to assimilate the institutional underpinning of the students' cultural values in the regular practice. The goal of culturally responsive teaching is to achieve comfortable climate in the classroom, maintain both academic excellence and cultural integrity. The paper examines the way how university - based leadership programs could be organized and developed. A process of leadership development demands interconnectedness of all actors with a global outlook, justifies vision-based argumentation skills, and international leadership programs. The authors view the leadership programs based on respect, a climate of trust, social connectedness, and empathy. The paper discusses the concept of leadership, motivation, and unity training skills.

Key words: teaching techniques; motivational program; intercultural communication; unity training.

1 Introduction

You can learn a lot about teaching techniques and materials, but it is difficult to become really professional without learning how the best teachers all over the world do their jobs. The purpose of the paper is to reveal the importance of international teaching seminars and practice. Realization of this goal involves the following tasks: to view the examples of intercultural misunderstanding; to discuss the leadership techniques; to highlights   the use of humor in the international classroom; to view the behavioral clashes that could happen in the

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international teams. This study is relevant due to the fact that teaching experience should offer a practical guidance and develop intercultural competences in order to make international students get equally involved in the process of learning. The paper discusses the motivational programs, cross-cultural communicative practice, areas of conflict, and the role of a leader in the international project teams.

Within the framework of the proposed subject, various methods and approaches based on the system-structural analysis of the phenomena studied were used. To determine the specific features of the influence of the cultural traditions on the students' performance, the authors used the methods of comparative analysis. To study the main issues related to cultural traditions, a logical method was used to determine the multifaceted nature of the phenomena.

2 Discussion

It is known that the relations between teaching and culture are close. The teaching process should be aimed at focusing on the needs of the learners and understanding what their cultural differences are. Flexibility is the skill that will help the teacher to embrace the chaos that the students with different cultural background might cause when the learners think and react differently. The students grew up in different neighborhoods and it is important to offer them stability, support, succor. It is important to provide appropriate teaching practice encouraging international students to take risks as they learn, find their own solutions, and to provide opportunities for them to think critically and creatively. In communities where 'replicative' learning' is the norm, students are expected to memorize a lot of material rather than think critically. Group thought and oneness is appreciated over thinking differently and this can cause difficulty when the students have to participate in debates or write essays for university classes. Often the students with other cultural values are not used to being asked to give their own opinion. In such classrooms we have to train students to think and make judgments on their own. If you work with international students it is important to understand that the expectations of the students and our plans coincide, because knowing what we want from our students and ensuring they know it too will help

create a supportive and transparent classroom environment where everyone knows what is expected of him or her.

The motivational program for the students can be based on the idea of 'possible selves', or our visions of what we might like to become in the future. (Dornyei, 2009) We suggest the learners should outline six components of the program: Creating a vision; strengthening the vision; substantiating the vision; keeping the vision alive, and counterbalancing a vision. The special classroom activities should be done in order to support the motivational activity. These activities should be integrated into the syllabus. We usually begin with creating a class poster to suit al the learners 'very similar goals. This poster   proved to be instrumental in reminding the students of what they wanted for themselves and it keep them motivated.

There are two questions to be asked during the course of intercultural communication. Firstly, how are culture-based values and basic assumptions passed on from generation to generation, if not through communication and interaction? And secondly, how are culture-based values and basic assumptions expressed, re-enacted and re-created every day, if not in communication and interaction? It is at this level that intercultural misunderstandings, distrust and breakdown of communication occur. It is, therefore, practical communication and interaction that intercultural training courses need to pay attention to. This is all the more true if all parties involved use English as their common lingua franca. Learning styles is the first cross-cultural issue that teachers encounter. Language and communicative practice are a primary means of marking and maintaining group social identity. (Gumperz, 1982), and reproducing the boundaries that divide social groups. Issues of inequality-whether ethnic or class-are intertwined with ethnicity in modern class societies, so interethnic communication often involves the elements of misunderstanding, irritation or conflict. If you take, for example, the communicative differences in the model of behavior between Asian and African students, they seem to illustrate the insight of conflicts and misunderstanding. Face-to-face communication between Asian and African students often leave them feel insulted. African students often complain of the lack of respect. The concept of respect is given a high value by many African

students. Students from Asia blame African students for speaking at high volume and inappropriate or rude behavior. The underlined themes for both groups appear to be respect, verbal and non-verbal politeness, and tactful behavior towards each other. While African students focus their attention on the relative lack of interpersonal engagement, the Chinese students, for example, emphasize the lack of restraint on the part of the African students. Since both involvement and restraint can be used to show and display respect, the relative lack of either can be perceived as insulting or inappropriate. For African students the greeting smile, eye-contact, and the ability to make a small talk, for example a small talk about the weather, are the ideas of respect and engagement. The absence or lack of interaction and engagement is seen by African students as the kind of discrimination and racism. The concept of respect is often understood by Chinese students as looking up to a superior in a hierarchical relationship but not as a concept of treating someone as a respected equal(Smith,2012). Small talks about the weather or current events, jokes and funny stories are considered as a sign of poor manners by some Asian students. The different attitude towards humor is deeply rooted in cultural values and traditions so humor seems to manifest differently in Eastern and Western worlds. American and European students consider the sense of humor as more important in comparison with the Chinese. People from different cultural background perceive humor in a different way (Liang & Kale, 2012). In general, European students use jokes more often than the Chinese students do (Davis, 2011). Loud laughter makes Chinese students feel uncomfortable; Confucian moralists required restraint from laughter to demonstrate dignity (Hoffmann et al, 2013). Humor in Chinese culture is thought as not very much desirable for communication and interaction.

If the teacher is ready to understand the cultural differences and the expectations of the students then a lot of conflicts might be avoided. The syllabus should be definitely negotiated with the students. Delivering what the learner wants, but not at the expense of what you consider they need, is a skill in itself. A Personal Study Plan addresses the issues for course emphasis on any of four skills. It is essential to identify realistic and achievable goals so that both you and your trainees can work towards them within the time together. Encourage your students to identify the area, which they want to improve on the course. Not all cultures are

comfortable interacting with their teacher on an equal level. Naturally cultural awareness is a two-way thing and it is reasonable to expect students to conform to the customs of your country. However, rather than regarding cultural differences as a problem it is a good idea to discuss them so that the students feel the problems are being acknowledged. A good way of doing this is by getting your international students explain their expectations before starting the course. It is equally important to have monitoring and evaluation plan as well as the feedback system. Project managers have a crucial role in facilitating communication among team members and ensuring there is transparency, for all team members, about the implementation process. International teams are consolidated by working together to accomplish tasks perceived as rewarding. Responsibility is important as the delegation of responsibility to project teams will lead to more commitment. The students who do the research in the cross-cultural teams or participate in international projects are supposed to get training in communication and interpersonal skills. Here are some suggestions for successful project work implementation:

-Hold regular meetings to propel communication and avoid misunderstanding about the project priorities.

-Give team members soft skills coaching and training

-Develop the area of mutual respect. Foresee disagreement and solve the conflicts immediately.

-Always listen, acknowledge, respond and resolve remaining differences.

Often the body language is more important that words. Listening skills are very important for the project leaders as the leaders often have to deal with the feelings. There should be the level of trust among the group players. Each student need to feel appreciation and "safety" about sharing the ideas. It is important for the team leader to foster the appreciation for different or strange views and discuss alternative ideas with respect. By managing the conflict, if it occurs, the leader can use it as a generating tool for innovation and change. If we consider the Finnish system of education the Finns are taught from childhood to relate different points of view on phenomena, events and interpret their meaning. We think that the best in the system of Finnish education is the attitude of teachers

towards students: the relationship between teachers and students is not constrained by formal frameworks and conventions, it is free and easy. There are a lot of international students in Finland because they feel comfortable and contented with the process of learning. Having fun is a notion you can apply to any workplace anywhere. It is a good idea to get together for lunch with watching reruns of British classical comedies, for example. Having fun with your students creates more social glue for any team than the bonuses will ever provide. Whether you like it or not, your students look to you for signals, and the teachers have enormous influence over them, the signal the teacher is always supposed to send to the students is how important they are for him or her. It is vitally important to discuss the goals with every student as in today's fast – paced world we are determined to create a culture where everyone in the classroom should feel comfortable to say freely what they want to say. In our interviews with the students, we got feedback in ways we never imagined. We consider that the diversity training has made students more aware of their differences. Our unity training is focused on positive reasons and common interests to prove the benefits of community. The secret to lasting change is to implement the processes that people will enjoy carrying out. We focused our leadership efforts on encouraging students not only to study, but also to have fun as they did it.

Conclusion. In international classroom the special attention should be paid to the comfortable climate and cross- cultural training. The tactics of working with international students and helping them realize their full potential has been thoroughly discussed. Lead by example, listen aggressively, communicate purpose, create a climate of trust, look for results, build up the students' confidence, generate unity, learn the unique cultural backgrounds of your students - these are the items that will help the teacher achieve success and make the classroom an area of comfort. The greatest teachers' satisfaction comes from helping the students reach their potential. That's probably what keeps teachers going.

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Some aspects of the interdependence of the economy of the region and education

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Abstract

The level of economic development of the region, affecting the quality of life of people, is directly related to education and science. In this regard, the university community is called upon to solve a number of tasks related to the training of highly qualified personnel, professionals capable of professionally solving production and other tasks, such as developing an economic development strategy, determining the methodology for analyzing crisis situations, justifying priority areas for optimizing the economic component of the region, etc. Efficiency realization of the competence approach in education, the idea of human capital is of paramount importance for the whole process of social development.

Key words: economic development, education, science, competence, culture, human capital, cadres, level, professional, society.

Arguing about the economic situation of the development of the region, and those components that most directly affect the quality of life of people, it seems that it is necessary to pay special attention to the interconnection of the regional economy with education and science. Why?

The preparation of highly qualified personnel, specialists capable of professionally solving production and other tasks, elaborating an economic development strategy, defining a methodology for analyzing crisis situations and justifying priority areas for optimizing the economic component of the region are far from a complete list of problems addressed, in particular, by the university community.

In general, timely response to these problems, finally, allows us to talk about the state of the general culture of each person and its socio-dynamics. Culture in this case is considered as the most important generalizing characteristic of society, various social groups and individuals actively engaged in production, in the system of economic relations. Including it reflects the changes that occur in

education. The influence of education on culture is multifaceted. The general decline in the educational level, in the final analysis, also reduces the overall level of culture, which finds its indirect relation to the economy. Moreover, the trends in education in many ways determine the type of culture in society. Thus, humanitarian education demonstrates certain patterns of morality in society, affects the moral culture; technical education determines the state of technical culture; legal education has a significant impact on the legal culture, etc.

The importance of the influence of education on culture and society as a whole is constantly increasing. Some foreign authors consider the education system as a factor of national security. "The nation is in danger, since the educational foundations of our society are currently undermining an ever-growing wave of mediocrity ... If the unfriendly power made an attempt to impose on America such a mediocre education system that exists today, we would regard it as an act of war," - The Federal report of the US National Commission for 2008 stressed.

Speaking about the results of education, which affect the various subsystems of society, including economic, it should be emphasized that the idea of competences has recently been effectively introduced. The idea of competence includes not only the quality of education, but also the possibility of implementing this quality in professional activities. Competencies are, in a certain sense, the use of the received quality.

In exact wording competences are considered as a complex formed in the process of education or as a result of the accumulated practical experience of the opportunities for effective behavior in certain life situations and in professional activities. These opportunities are determined by a complex of knowledge, skills and abilities, understanding of situations and problems, life position, values structure, motivation of behavior, readiness for certain types and role structure of activity. Ultimately, competence is associated with the implementation of a functional program of a particular goal-oriented system in which an educated person is involved.

In recent years, the question of human capital has been increasingly raised in Western and Russian literature (G. Bekkr, T. Schulz, and others). Human capital

is considered as a reserve, structure and character of knowledge, intellectual potential (experience and possibilities of using knowledge in problems solving), activity skills, motivation, education, life and work experience, health, geographical mobility, the ability to search and retrieve information.

In the understanding of human capital, education is central. All other characteristics of human capital depend on its nature and level. Therefore, human capital should be regarded as the result of education. Indeed, it is in the processes of education that a person is enriched with knowledge, mastering his or her skills, mastering the methods of self-education, psychologically tuning in to certain types of professional activity and the role of professional behavior, and developing creative abilities. Understanding human capital as a result of education corresponds to the goal of education.

It should be noted that the idea of human capital in scientific thought is caused by objective reasons. It is an attempt to take into account the real socio-economic changes generated by the scientific and technological revolution and expressed itself in the fact that under present conditions, the accumulation of non-material elements of wealth (scientific achievements, growth in the level of education of the population, etc.) has become of paramount importance for the entire process of social development .

The theory of human capital allows us to explain in a peculiar way the structure of the distribution of personal incomes, the age dynamics of earnings, the inequality in the payment of male and female labor, the causes of migration, and much more. Due to this theory, educational investment has come to be regarded as a source of economic growth, no less important than traditional investments. The received education makes a person not only a more effective worker, but also a more effective student. In addition, the more a person is gifted, the less he spends his efforts to acquire new knowledge, that is, the lower costs he incurs in raising his educational level.

Human capital includes accumulated investment in education and training. The knowledge and skills that a person possesses and that are acquired through education and training, including skill, obtained with work experience, constitute

a certain reserve, determining the effectiveness of his activities. The monetary value of this capital stock is determined by the wage rates by which the human capital can be "rented" by employers in the labor market. The level of education is one of the signs of a stratified division of society. As N. Smelser notes, "education is a reasonable way of distributing people according to their merits" [2, p. 429]. The central methodological setting in the foreign concept of understanding human capital is built on the principle of the maximizing behavior of individuals.

It assumes that investments in education, health care, change of activities, mobility are carried out on a rational basis - for the sake of obtaining greater incomes in the future [1, p. 217]. These costs, or investments in the formation of human capital, are extremely important, both for a single organization (company) and for the whole society. The expected return on investment in human capital includes a higher level of earnings, greater satisfaction from the selected work during life, as well as a higher assessment of social behavior.

Human capital is understood not only as a person's knowledge, skills and abilities, but also as his creative potential, positive social activity, vision of the future, mobility and motivation for changes that contribute to the growth of his productive power. Productive qualities and characteristics of the employee were recognized as a special form of capital on the grounds that their development requires considerable time and material resources and that they, like physical capital, provide their owner with a higher income.

Disclosing the mutual influence of the region's economic development and education, it is worth paying attention to the fact that modern education is inconceivable without science, without active interaction of scientific, educational and production (economic) communities. According to many researchers, in the development of science itself, education plays a primary role. The influence of education as a system on science can be traced in different directions. Let's note the most significant of them.

First, education is the nutrient medium of science. "In the educational process in both youth and pedagogical environment, their connection and interaction, new

ideas are born. Here there is a "voltaic arc" of the original. and bold thoughts, fantastic projects "[1, p. 17]. The notion of "university science" has long been included in the scientific revolution. The scientific component of education has become traditional for the modern education system. Many scientific discoveries have their origins in education. Education becomes a source of scientific ideas.

Secondly, education is very important also as a sphere of realization of scientific ideas that influence the structure of intellect, motivate its development. In turn, the practice of educational activity corrects these ideas, verifies their truth in the process of education.

Thirdly, education determines the fundamental nature of science, the emergence of those of its provisions that reflect objective laws.

Fourth, the skills of primary scientific activity are acquired in the education system (through the writing of course and diploma papers, the conduct of laboratory classes, the defense of dissertations). In the process of formation, future scientific cadres are formed as well as objective laws.

Fifth, the quality of the education obtained determines the further development of science. In the end, what kind of specialists come to science, depends on what knowledge they have received. It's not just the quality and the amount of knowledge that has been gained. People come to science with a formed system of values. The motivation for engaging in science from different people can be different (someone strives to make a career in the field of science management, someone to earn more money, and someone to open a new star). In many ways, this motivation is formed in the process of education.

Sixth, the rapid development of scientific knowledge itself, the continuous obsolescence of knowledge acquired at the stage of education, makes a person permanently in the education system (additional education, training, etc.).

All these directions are related to each other. Only their interaction allows to fully reveal the influence of the education system on the development of science, which, in the final analysis, is reflected in the economic sphere of the life activity of society and man.

Modern educational institutions (especially universities) are inconceivable without science. It is no accident that the Bologna Declaration specifically emphasizes that education should be based on scientific research. This means that a mechanism must be established in higher educational institutions to implement innovative scientific developments as quickly as possible in the educational process.

The innovation of Russian universities is undoubtedly one of the most important tasks. At the same time, the craze for fashionable "concepts" leads to the fact that the same universities, depending on the mood of the leadership or the received phantoms, become an innovative university today, a corporate university tomorrow, and then put forward a "mission" of the research university. In general, the innovativeness of the university is sometimes interpreted extremely narrowly. Innovation should be understood as unique and constantly updated knowledge and skills of educators and trainees.

In conclusion, we emphasize that in modern conditions, when determining the economic strategy for the development of the region, it is necessary to take into account the world trends in the development of education and science, to take into account the opportunities and role of educational institutions in implementing the stated social and economic programs by the subjects of social development.

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Modern approaches in the study of innovative potential of the border region

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Abstract

The article presents the features of the formation of indicators to assess the level of innovation potential of border regions. The necessity of application of the integrated approach is proved and the system of principles of an assessment taking into account specifics of development of frontier territories is formulated. A procedure for the selection of experts and an integrated assessment of the innovative potential of the border region is proposed. The algorithm and method of selection of indicators to assess the innovative potential of the region.

Key words: innovative potential, border region, principles of evaluation of innovative potential, indicators of innovative development.

The future of Russia in the modern world is determined by the viability and development of vast territories, the quality of human capital, stability and efficiency of public administration institutions. Without a qualitative internal breakthrough, Russia is doomed to play a peripheral role in the world. Creating a favourable international environment for such a breakthrough is a strategic priority of our foreign policy.

The imposed economic sanctions against the largest Russian companies and financial institutions compel domestic enterprises, as well as entire regions, to turn to import substitution, which requires the activation of innovative processes and increasing investment attractiveness. At the same time, the management of investment and innovation processes in the peripheral regions of our country, which usually have a more complex set of interactions due to their geographical location, is characterized by significant features and differences.

Historically, the territories of the country bordering with other States had specific features in economic development, due, on the one hand, to geographical proximity and great opportunities for contacts with foreign partners, on the other

– a certain isolation due to the remoteness of many of them from the economic and political center of the country. Differences in the administrative, social and cultural spheres of the border areas, both with the center and with the regions on the other side of the border, have a significant impact on the degree of attraction of domestic and foreign technologies.

The region is a complex organized system with a set of interrelated goals and objectives defined by the needs of the population, its individual social groups, economic entities and the state, observing the external form, rules of conduct and existing ethical standards within the established legislation.[2]

To date, innovative development of various areas of border regions is difficult without sufficient investment, so there is a problem of increasing the investment attractiveness of these regions, which is among the most pressing problems of their strategic development. In these circumstances, cross-border cooperation is the most effective form of integration, allowing to use the specifics of remote from the center of the border regions of Russia. [3]

Innovative potential is a complex, multifactorial, multivariate phenomenon that requires careful and thorough study. However, its assessment is initially hampered by the fact that there is no single definition of this concept, the system of indicators of innovative potential has not been fully developed.

In the works of a number of Russian and foreign scientists the theoretical aspects of the definition and evaluation of innovative potential are considered. Despite the significant number of publications on this subject, they do not contain methodological proposals for the definition of innovative potential for border regions and methods for its evaluation. The choice of a set of indicators that determine the innovative potential of the border region should be formed taking into account the following factors:

- geographical location of the region and its natural and climatic conditions;
- the ecological condition of the region, taking into account the environmental standards established in the adjacent territory;
- total reserves of resources and, first of all, natural resources;
- political situation in the neighboring state, on the other side of the border;

- quality and development of infrastructure, including business;
- regional scientific potential.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the innovative potential of the border region is an integral indicator, taking into account economic, technological, organizational, environmental and other factors affecting the strategic development, but with a significant adjustment due to the special socio – economic situation of the border area. Figuratively speaking, as well as for all regions, but adjusted for "neighbors".

In the formation of strategic programs for the development of territories, representatives of regional authorities of border areas are faced with the need to develop an integrated indicator that reflects the capabilities of a complex regional economic system, which involves the choice of the criterion of "innovative potential of the region", the definition of the principles of its formation and the range of indicators on the basis of which it will be calculated. When forming a set of indicators that determine the innovative potential of the border region, it should be borne in mind that the selected indicators must necessarily take into account not only the characteristics of the region, but also the impact imposed by the conditions of territorial location, high sensitivity to changes in political and economic conditions in the adjacent territory.

The proposed approach assumes that the system of principles for assessing the innovative potential and a set of indicators must necessarily take into account the specifics of the border area, and the innovative potential of the border region is inseparable from the conditions created by the external geopolitical and economic environment. Difficulties in the formation of a set of indicators to assess the innovative potential of the border region due to the fact that not all indicators in the evaluation of innovation are obvious and unambiguous, which requires additional factor analysis. To manage the regional innovation potential, the selected set of indicators should be convenient for practical use and transparent in the analysis.

The proposed principles for assessing the innovative potential were developed based on the above mentioned features of the border region:

1. The principle of comprehensiveness is a multi-level comprehensive assessment of regional innovation potential, taking into account all significant factors and reflected in the performance of the region.

2. The principle of consistency-the use of a systematic approach to the selection and evaluation of both internal and geo-economic indicators in relation to the region, the consideration of their relationship.

3. The principle of adaptability-the method of assessing the innovative potential should be adapted to the changing geopolitical and economic conditions of the region.

4. The principle of relevance-selected indicators characterize the regional innovation potential in relation to the border area.

5. The principle of reality-the possibility of calculating the integral index, not only in theory but also in practice.

6. The principle of accuracy - used in the evaluation of innovative potential indicators of regional development should strive to characterize the region with a sufficient degree of completeness and objectivity.

7. The principle of dynamism-a set of indicators should take into account changes in both the domestic economic environment and the geo-economic environment.

The proposed algorithm for the selection of indicators to assess the innovative potential of the border region is shown in Fig.1.
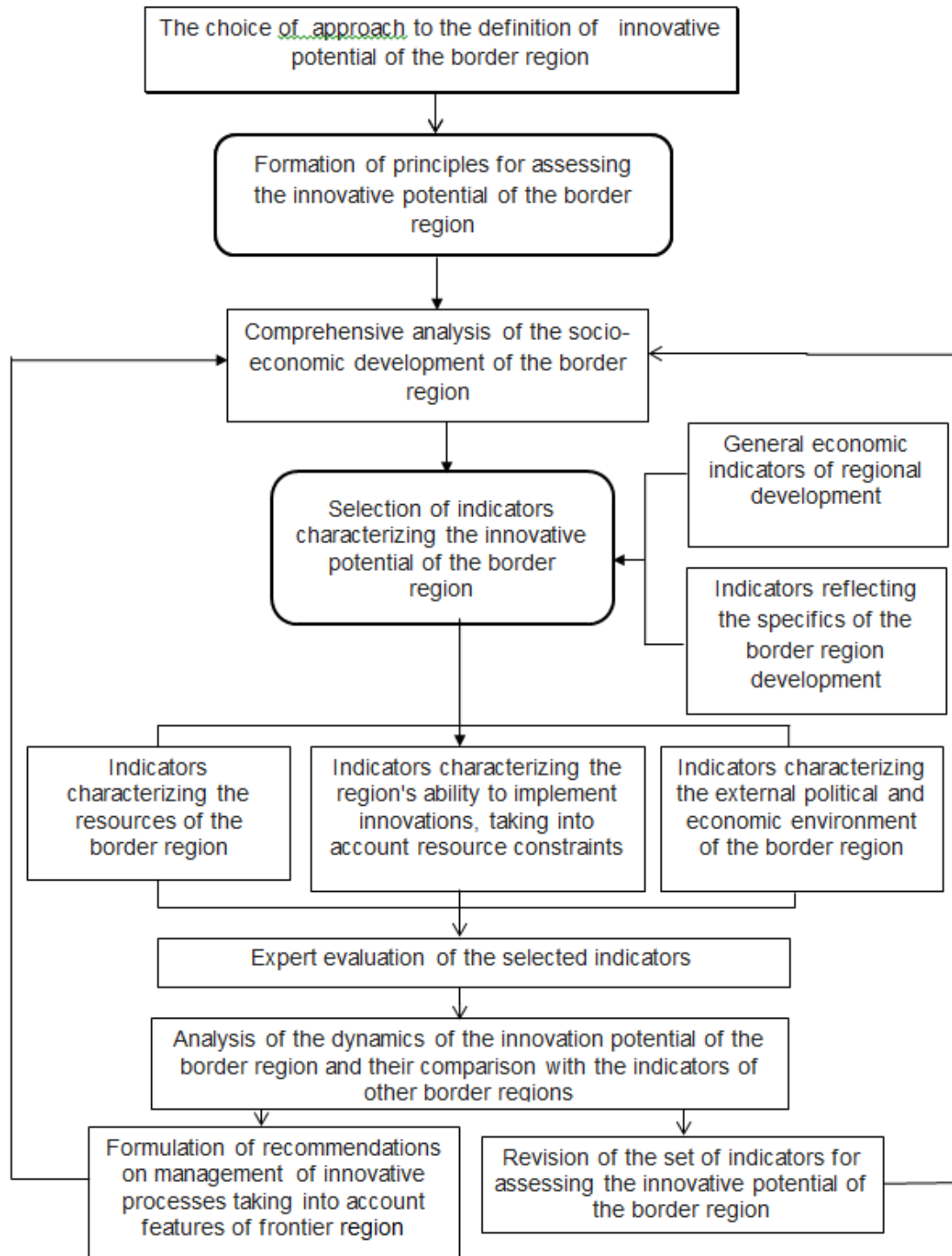
Figure 1. Algorithm of selection of indicators to assess the innovative potential of the border region

Thus, the presented set of indicators of integrated assessment of innovation potential will make it possible to determine the level of innovation potential of any border region. These indicators characterizing the internal environment of the region are divided into two subgroups, one characterizes the region in terms of the availability of possible internal resources for innovation, the second group -

the ability and ability of the region to implement innovation in the presence of limited resources. The second group consisted of indicators characterizing the external investment and innovation environment of the region.

In the course of work on the article, the aim was to link the essence of the innovative potential of the border region and the principles of its definition, using the algorithm of selection of indicators to assess the management of innovation processes in the border regions. The practical application of the proposals will make it possible to ensure the comparability of the assessment results and to adapt the management of the border region to specific conditions.

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Internationalization in higher education as a factor of social and economic development of Leningrad region

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Abstract

The main strategic goal of social and economic development of Leningrad region is to achieve indicators of economic growth, development of entrepreneurship and social sphere. As the world experience shows, the socio-economic development of the country is associated with entrepreneurial activity, with competitiveness on the foreign market, with introduction of innovation, and innovation is based mainly on a significant sector of basic research, combined with an effective system of vocational education. In this regard, it is obvious that a necessary condition for the formation of innovative economy is modernization of higher education system. Modern trends reflecting the direction of development of the present world prompt to pay attention to the correlation of such processes as globalization and internationalization of education.

Key words: professional education, competitiveness, socio-economic development of the region, globalization and internationalization of education, economic growth.

World experience shows that the socio-economic development of the country, its competitiveness on the foreign market, is based mainly on a significant sector of basic research, combined with the effective education system, developed national innovation system. It follows that the necessary condition for the formation of an innovative economy is modernization of education system, which is the basis of dynamic economic growth and social development of the society, a factor of well-being of citizens and security of the country.

Current economic conditions in the Russian Federation are characterized by a significant impact of negative geopolitical trends associated with sanctions imposed by developed countries, limited access to international finance, volatility of global financial markets, growth of crisis factors.

Recent trends in the world economy, related to the heterogeneity of the world economy, the difference in economic growth rates, suggest the initial inequality of opportunities for the participation of national economic systems in globalization. This contributes to the intensification of competition between countries, regions and firms. Despite the differences in development, there is a certain level of interaction between countries with different socio-economic opportunities in the wide range of cooperation areas.

Leningrad region is the largest in the north-west of Russia transport center, one of the leading regions in the timber industry and agriculture. The region has considerable natural resources, high labor potential in terms of professional qualification. The region conducts active foreign economic and foreign trade activities, takes the leading positions in the country in a number of branches of agriculture and industry, develops resources to create a decent standard of living for the population. One of the main advantages of the geographical location of the Leningrad Region is its close proximity to Northern and Eastern Europe due to its common borders with Finland and Estonia, as well as its access to the Baltic Sea, which provides one of the highest indicators of regional foreign trade turnover in the Russian Federation.

The investment attractiveness of any region depends on the current state of its economy and its potential development. Leningrad region is one of the most industrialized regions of Russia and is a donor to the Federal budget, which indicates the stability and efficiency of its financial and economic system. Leningrad region is one of the leading regions in terms of investment attractiveness among all subjects of the Russian Federation. The main strategic goal of the social and economic development of Leningrad region in the long term is to achieve economic growth, business and social sphere development.

As the world experience shows, the socio-economic development of the country is associated with entrepreneurial activity, with competitiveness in the foreign market, with the introduction of innovation, and innovation is based mainly on a significant sector of basic research, combined with an effective system of vocational education. In this regard, it is obvious that a necessary condition for the formation of an innovative economy is the modernization of higher education

system. The development of national economy is associated with the growth of professional training, creativity and flexibility of thinking, the ability to accept and solve complex and non-standard tasks in business, to find and apply the right organizational and management decisions, to develop algorithms for the implementation of non-standard situations. This leads to the conclusion that one of the most important levers of the development of national economic systems is education. In the context of globalization of economy and the ever-increasing competition in all its segments, the dynamic development of the national economy is the key to the stability of the state, which determines its security and standard of living. At the same time, structural economic changes in the world must be taken into account. Currently, the basis of competitiveness and economic development of the country is scientific and technological progress and intellectualization of the main factors of production.

Present trends reflecting the direction of development of the modern world prompt to pay attention to the correlation of such processes as globalization and internationalization of education.

Internationalization of education is a complex process that affects not only educational activities, but also research. It covers all activities of higher education institutions and directs them towards international cooperation. The process covers not only external forms in the form of education abroad. It is also a complex internal transformation.

We can distinguish a variety of formats of international cooperation:

- mobility of educational purposes, which includes not only students and teaching staff, but also representatives of University administration;

- implementation of various training tools;

- preparation of updated educational standards on the basis of international standards and their inclusion in the curricula of universities;

- creation of various forms of long-term partnership in the institutional sphere of education.

Today it is obvious that even global processes need to be regulated, and that it includes not only specific enterprises or organizations, but also the state itself. There are three main levels of management of internationalization of education:

- state;
- regional;
 - inside the educational institution itself

Each level has its own strategy and management tools. The tools can be developed in a complex or at each level. For example, at the state level, the tools and norms are being created that allow universities develop effectively in this direction. Forming a strategy for the development of the internationalization process, the state should take into account not only the trends of the existing foreign experience, but also the specifics of its cultural environment, the potential of higher education institutions, their material base.

At the regional level, in particular in Leningrad region, the conditions and infrastructure should be formed, which will not only allow the dynamic development of educational institutions, but also create comfortable conditions for foreign students.

At the University level should be introduced to high-quality specialized programs, which offer educational services at the international level; cooperation with foreign higher education institutions. There are the following tools and forms of international cooperation: invitation of international experts; development of such element as international competence; formation of institutional partnership; participation of the University in international rankings; development of joint educational projects; development and implementation of research programs with foreign partners; certification of the quality of education on the basis of international standards and so on.

We can distinguish the following factors that affect the effectiveness of the management of internationalization of education:

- first, it is the potential of the institution of higher education: material and technical equipment, the level of development of the teaching staff and so on;

- second, it is the political situation in the country and the socio-economic development of the country in general and the region in particular. The consideration of socio-economic conditions of development is based on demographic, geographical and economic data, which also need to be taken into account in the design and implementation of education development strategies.

Internationalization of education is an important component of the development of global processes, which includes not only various educational institutions, regions, but also entire States.

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Socio-cultural orientation of modernization of the contemporary education system in Azerbaijan

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The XXI century, which is the century of the overwhelming development of information technologies and the improvement of sciences such as psychology and sociology, forces a person to reconsider their views in most of the important spheres of his existence. One of such strategic areas for society is education.

The experience of managing an educational institution proves that the main way of development of the education system is to ensure the competitiveness of each institution and its graduate, and the basis of it is the quality of education.

Modernization of the education system makes it necessary to set new goals, as well as to build a system capable of adjusting the goals and ways to achieve them. The effectiveness of the implementation of this task depends on the quality of pedagogical education in the Azerbaijan Republic. Developing society needs teachers who can independently take responsible decisions, predict their possible consequences, capable to cooperation, characterized by mobility, dynamism, constructiveness, possessing a developed sense of responsibility for the destiny of their pupils and the country. One of the main demands of the labor market for a modern specialist is the corresponding level of his competence: the ability to effectively carry out professional abilities; flexibility, mobility and independence in the implementation of functional duties.

Socio-political changes taking place in the post-Soviet area have affected all institutions, in particular: culture and education, which is characteristic of

Azerbaijan. The goals, content, organization of education considers the formation of a person of civil society as a subject of new relations - a free, independent, sovereign, individually responsible person, ready to make free choice to the cultural space. This includes organization of activities in the field of culture and education and takes into account historically established structures that ensure socialization of family, cultural and educational institutions, mosques (religious institutions).

The modern stage of historical evolution, in context of the transition from a traditional society to a civil one, leads to the emancipation of a person from class, family, sometimes communal regulations and enables the acquisition of a new degree of freedom, which is expressed in autonomy, individuality, and personal responsibility.

The evolution of philosophical and pedagogical consciousness is reflected in different ways in the transformation of national education systems, which are based on the uniqueness of cultural traditions. The poly-ethnic nature of modern society strengths the education system consolidation functions, as a result of which the reliance on traditional ethnic values, the origins of the development of national knowledge, the dialogue of culture, national and cultural priorities, the use of new information technologies enables performing analytical and prognostic function.

As it is known, collapse of the Soviet Union led in its former republics to search for cultural identity, values, priorities and ways of modernizing all main spheres of life, including education. In the humanistic sphere, the republics are characterized by an appeal to their history - the world outlook, the concept of values (values norms and standards of social life and behavior) a revival of what was considered unique in it. Revision of historical events, the activities of outstanding social and religious persons, and their works influencing the development of significant cultural phenomena is considered to be the current stage of the state's development in the post-Soviet area.

One of the main areas of multicultural interaction between the post-Soviet area states is the development of the education system in the context of the Bologna process; development of managerial and organizational solutions, and the

strengthening of the interdisciplinary component in the integrated education system. Structural changes in the society were formed on base of the selection of goals, values and content in all its directions and in different ways influenced them in the connection of cultural, social and educational efforts for the socialization of the population in new social and social conditions.

The general cultural orientation of education, traditional for any society, included components related both to the specifics of the socio-political and ethno-cultural situation, takes into account the public's attention to the historical-legal focus on the religious dominant, interest in myths, images and creativity.

A feature of this period is the development of the educational system which assumes the existence of sufficiently developed elements of social support and the allocation assistance types to minimize the numerous risks. In this regard, educational institutions activated works of various cultural institutions such as: museums, theaters, libraries. At the same time, the accompanying medical, social, psychological-pedagogical related services were created in educational institutions. In some institutions a resource and communication network is opened. Cultural institutions enabled to accommodate and serve people with disabilities. Initiatives, related to the social protection of students, support and cement the system of lifelong education and integrate it into the socio-cultural context.

Formation of new educational communities and standards of life-long (continuous) education for different social and age groups is being actively carried out. Realization of social functions of continuity contributed to the development of various types, forms and directions of formal, informal and informational education for various sociocultural and demographic groups of the population. At the same time, the compensation-correction character is dominating. Cultural initiatives and a wide range of types and forms of education "safes" large groups of the population. This is especially true for the low-mobile groups of the population who, in distance education and in various types of educational inclusion, see an opportunity to preserve their socio-

cultural status, ability to restructure a personal-life program aimed at obtaining a definite result, including a functional competence.

International projects have become an important for educational organizations and contribute to the expansion of cross-border cooperation in the field of qualified personnel training.

Initiatives in the field of culture and education contribute to the social displacement of the population. Information-communication education, systems of inclusive and distance education in various forms and types for different social groups allowed to take into account a wide range of ethno-cultural and socio-demographic characteristics of the population. The development of public consciousness, the shifts in the value-cultural sphere, the analysis of historical experience and the uniqueness of modernization processes in the social -educational aspect influenced the choice in the former Soviet republics of their own ways of developing general, professional, additional education.

General orientation toward the humanization of society, the development of national socio-cultural and educational systems makes it possible to consider them from the following most significant positions:

- practicality in understanding ways to improve social and educational systems when solving identity problems in different national-cultural, social and religious societies;

- consideration the development features of the sociality of modern man in transforming society and development of the compensatory aspect of education and its sociocultural functions;

- actualization of understanding of the potential of interdisciplinary research, both past and present, related to the complex of human sciences and the use of their results in the modern educational situation;

-support of vocational models education in the context of realizing the Bologna process, meeting the requirements of the modern socio-cultural stage of the development of society;

-special attention is paid to the preparation of undergraduates and degree seekers [3].

The social and cultural-civilizational paradigms of the development of society in the post-Soviet area in the presence of common features in different ways affect the dynamics of the development of social institutions and the correlation of socio-cultural and educational functions in national education systems.

Initiatives to modernize education are primarily related to the problem of identity, which requires deep attention and patriotic education of the population. Interest in society is growing in the sense of the time of history, the peculiar world of the past, the feeling of unity with its own people and with its land. In this context, the interest in the national culture of the past, the scientific feat of public figures, scientists, researchers, representatives of different epochs, provide a "connection of times" in the system of the spiritual potential of the people's life with its traditions, religious originality and spiritual values. It is on this basis that is possible to acquire a genuine identity of the nation and develop along the path of seeking justice, conscience, spiritual and cultural self-determination.

System of higher education in Azerbaijan, has typical issues related to the adaptation of the Bologna process in the system of school and university education [1,2,3]. Attention is growing to the goals and values of the national culture. In this regard, many teachers are studying the pedagogical heritage of the past known scientists and public figures. Several separate programs are being organized to study the heritage of public figures and scientists [3] and are actively used in the teaching and educational process: these are the works of the thinker and poet N. Ganjavi (1141-1209); (1201-1274), enlightener, public figure Mirza Fatali Akhundov (1812-1878), poet, teacher and educator Haji Kerim Sanili, etc.

Considering intellectual potential of a large number of national scientists, it can be concluded that the modern educational practice can be enriched with examples of national achievements, which at times have been insufficiently estimated or completely forgotten. Now is the time not only to revive their

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Cross-border development of work safety

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Abstract

In construction industry, the frequency of working accidents is considerably higher than in other fields of industry or other working environments. This was found to be important and common field of development between Russian and Finnish partner universities. After a long period of networking, a project called Safe, skilled and productive construction sites – SAFECON, was approved to be funded by South-East Finland – Russia CBC instrument. In November 2018, the project will finally start in practice. The main objective of SAFECON is to improve work safety competence in construction industry in the cross-border area, in order to increase the productivity of the industry, as well as reduce social costs and human suffering. Main output of the project is a work safety training environment, located in St. Petersburg. Tight cooperation between project partners has started already, including a joint seminar presentation in All-Russian work safety conference, as well as several meetings dealing with practical matters. It can be foreseen that this project will provide a platform for hands-on work to develop competence, research, common understanding and common practices to provide positive influence for the use of construction industry cross-border – and wider.

Keywords: competence, construction, cross-border, work safety

1   Work safety on construction sites

In construction industry, the frequency of working accidents is considerably higher than in other fields of industry or other working environments. Even though work safety in construction has been under development, and standardized and mandatory training actions are been implemented, the number of accidents, both lethal, as well as smaller ones, is still high. I addition, the distribution of accident risk level among the workers is not even. For example, the youngest and the oldest worker groups tend to have different kinds of accidents, and the young ones more accidents in total. (Rakennusteollisuus RT ry 2018.)

The share of foreign labour is increasing on construction sites. This challenges cultural assumptions and communication skills of the on-site managers. There is a lot of written training material and knowhow about for example the proper use of safety equipment, safe transitions, prevention of tumbling or slipping or

protection from falling objects. The training available is currently been carried out in the same format for all workers. However, there are several situational things, which effect the efficiency of the training and the implementation of the work safety regulations and practices. Those are such as organizational culture, which is formed mostly by the top management; employees' individual psychological and cultural aspects; as well as availability of experience-based, individualized training, which has more versatile possibilities for long-term learning and competence building than traditional classroom-oriented or written material-based learning.

2   Partner universities' awakening

Saimaa University of Applied Sciences (later referred as Saimaa UAS) and St. Petersburg State University of Architecture and Civil Engineering (later referred as StP. GASU, based on the university's original Russian name) have a long-term partnership in student and staff exchange, as well as in running a double degree programme in the field of civil and construction engineering. In 2013, Saimaa UAS was able to achieve some development funds by Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, to develop cross-border activities especially with St. Petersburg and Leningrad Region. During 2014–2015, active interaction to initiate new development projects was carried out with previous partners, as well as with new potential partners. One core area was construction industry (Hakkarainen 2014).

2.1   Example of safety training in real-life environment

As one of the actions implemented and funded by the Ministry's grant, a group of Russian and Finnish construction management experts took a trip to a so-called "Safety Park" in Espoo. This work safety training area was established in 2009 and operates as a physical training environment to practice work safety on construction sites, based on real-life simulation of different situations in safe environment (Rudus Turvapuisto 2018).

Both Finnish and Russian experts were highly interested in the practical training method. Construction work safety is a focal issue in Russia. Situation described in the beginning of this article is real in both countries, Finland and Russia, but in

Russia the figures are darker than in Finland. There are mandatory trainings, but it seems the supervision and attitudes, as well as the educational practices, could be improved. The Russian visitors were impressed of the Safety Park and saw a specific need for a similar training environment in St. Petersburg area.

2.2 Early stages of project development

With the Ministry's funding available for Saimaa UAS, a preliminary hearing of possibilities to start cross-border development of a Russian version of the Safety Park was initiated. Networking with potential partners and interest organizations and bodies started on both sides of the border. Suitable funding instrument would be South-East Finland - Russia Cross-Border Cooperation. This instrument was under preparation at the time.

Since the preparation of only suitable funding instrument went on for a while, there was no specific pressure or detailed timetable to put project ideas together. However, there was plenty of time for networking, meeting interested companies, officials and other universities interested in the subject. Especially for StP. GASU, this gave time to develop the idea of the physical environment, and possibility to even specify the location and suitable premises for the actual environment.

2.3 Phase two

In October 2016, some first rumours were finally heard about the Cross-Border Cooperation funding instrument to be finally opened, after about three years of waiting. At this time, there had been changes in the personnel in Saimaa UAS. The project ideas had to be collected, some re-organizing done and the final partner network was to be established. The main idea of building a physical training environment in St. Petersburg remained as the core of the project. Other than that, the objectives were taken towards research themes about organizational culture in construction companies, management and monitoring issues and individual aspects of work safety.

First call of project proposals for South-East - Russia Cross-Border Cooperation programme 2014–2020 was due March 15th 2017. The project proposal called "Safe, skilled and productive construction sites – SAFECON" was turned in. In

June 2017, the project was accepted to be funded amongst the first ones in the programme, just depending on the Russian ratification of the programme funding.

2.4 Starting time

After 14 months of impatient waiting, the ratification process of the funding was finally finished and the project is about to start in November 2018. The operational partners in SAFECON-project are, besides Saimaa UAS as the lead partner and StP. GASU as the main Russian partner, South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences (XAMK) and Pushkin Leningrad State University. Final budget of the development project is about 900 000 euros and the implementation time is 36 months.

3 Safe, skilled and productive construction sites

3.1 Project objectives and outputs

The main objective of project SAFECON is to improve work safety competence in construction industry in the cross-border area. The aim is that this will increase the productivity of the industry, as well as reduce social costs and human suffering. All steps and actions that reduce accident frequency, the harm level caused by the accidents, or the number of touch and go -cases have a positive influence on the productivity, public image of the industry, societal costs and the level of human suffering.

The main influence of the project actions will be a permanent, widely usable training environment and new interactive training models for work safety training for different target groups in the cross-border-area. This work safety training environment will be usable for all the actors within the cross-border area. The other main output of the project would be competence guidelines for top management and the cultural-sensitive monitoring methodology for work safety competence evaluation. Those will support companies, vocational and higher educational institutions for developing work safety practices on a modern, new level.

This individual and cultural-oriented approach has a recognized need and novelty value in work safety training in construction industry. Noticing situational, social

and psychological factors on individual level in both instructions and in training methodology will enhance learning and competence building and will reduce risks of accidents.

3.2 Cross-border community

The reason why cross-border-co-operation is so essential for the implementation of this particular educational cooperation, is the added value gained by bechmarking possibilities, as well as the importance of the construction industry as one of key industries in the cross-border area and the local SME's having operations and interests on both sides of the border. There is an opening for a new type of training environment in the area. The environment can operate also as a base for cross-border development in the industry, as well as a base for strengthening the relations between the SME's and the educational institutes.

The reasonable and effective solution is to establish one place in a central location and create one shared training model, in tight co-operation between the core institutions on both sides of the border. Strong commitment of the construction companies in the use of the environment will be achieved by close discussions with companies.

4 Working together

4.1 Tightening partnership

Preparation time between the submission of the project proposal in March 2017 and the actual starting point of the project in November 2018 has been 20 months. During that time, we have had several chances to discuss the project implementation and organization between the partners. We have had fruitful meetings. In Russia, companies have been involved in the discussions in early phase. We also had a chance to see the actual physical environment, where the training area will be established. Blueprints of the training area and the installations were ready already in application phase.

True form of international cooperation and tight partnership between the universities was presented in April 2018 in All-Russian Health and Safety Week in Sochi. This is a massive seminar organized by Ministry of Labour and Social

Protection of the Russian Federation, concerning variety of issues in the field of work safety and health. Russian association representing construction personnel (National Association of Self-Regulating Organizations based on the membership of building persons, "NOSTROI") invited a joint presentation about project SAFECON in this conference. There was a presentation by Finnish project leader, followed by a presentation by Russian work safety expert, professor Vitaly Tsaplin, form StP. GASU. Based on the experiences and speeches on that round-table session in the seminar, there is no doubt, that construction work safety is a major concern all over Russia, and Finnish expertise in this field is highly respected.

The experience of the seminar showed that co-operation between our Universities has grown already beyond standard or even advanced level on international cooperation, and yet the 3-year major work has not even begun.

4.2 Year 2021

Project will produce a new training environment and new work safety curricula for the use of higher education, vocational education and companies. The main achievement is to grow competence in the field of work safety together, cross-border, and between companies and education. Considering rich and eventful preparation of this project so far, one can only predict same pace for the next three years of implementation. This project provides a platform for hands-on work to develop competence, research, common understanding and common practices to provide positive influence for the use of construction industry cross-border – and wider.

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Involvement of University Students into Innovation Activities through Network of International Implementation Centers

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Abstract

Involvement of university students into innovation activities is among the key factors of their competence development. For widening students' participation in innovative R&D it is reasonable to create a platform allowing their contribution not only to research process but also to the process of implementing research results and innovative products including commercialization and marketing stages. Joining universities' efforts directed at arranging international events as a meeting point for students, young researchers and experts from different fields of science will increase students' motivation to be part of innovative R&D. Establishing international implementation centres on the both sides of the border will facilitate the whole process. The pilot mode of international implementation centres establishing, functioning, and networking is being developed in details at the Higher School of Technology and Energy of Saint Petersburg State University of Industrial Technologies and Design.

Keywords: competences, innovations, international implementation centres, sustainability, networking

The nowadays common trend in the competence development of university students is their involvement into innovation activities. Innovation centers are created at some universities, under university partnerships, in the frame of various projects and programmes, as independent institutions, etc. Intention of young people to be involved in innovations is supported by the state, by private companies and different projects including international ones. Students are provided with an opportunity to present the results of their innovative activities at fora, symposia, conferences and workshops of different levels. One of examples is IPA Higher Education Symposium for early-career scholars to be held in the

frame of International Russian Higher Education Conference in Moscow in October 2018.

For many higher educational institutions creation of innovation centers seems to be a challenge. It needs not only financial resources and research capacity but the developed system for motivating students to take part in such activities and got interested in dealing with innovations further.

This requires a platform for students and researchers communicating to demonstrate the prospects for innovative R&D, to arrange pilot activities for students to "taste" innovative research, to learn from related fields of science, to find their own place in the innovation development chain.

Joining the efforts at the international level could open extra opportunities and add value to such platform. Each partner university could contribute to common work with its unique features such as technologies, methodologies, approaches, design findings, etc. In addition, this could give a chance for the students to act in the international teams and intercultural environment.

Participation in innovative research is amazing itself, but for young people especially it is very important to learn about the ways of research results implementation. Because of this, the implementation centers are no less valuable than the innovation ones.

There exist several international programmes supporting international cooperation and networking of universities. One of the possibilities for our region is the SOUTH-EAST FINLAND-RUSSIA CBC 2014-2020 Programme with several priorities including Priority 2: Support to education, research, technological development and innovation.

The major part in the actions of the international implementation centers falls at:

1. joint activities aimed at relevant improvements of an innovation (if needed);
2. the use of available international experience in marketing of innovative ideas, products and services and commercialization of innovations for market entry;

3. arrangement of season schools and/or thematic workshops, various exhibitions on innovative R&D as a meeting point for students, young researchers and experts in different fields of science;

4. ensuring sustainability due to joint efforts of young and experienced researchers from partner universities.

It could be efficient to hold a seminar focused on implementation of innovations coupled with the Saimaa Calling International Week next year. We are ready to contribute to such event with presentation of a number of innovative products developed in the Technopark of the Higher School of Technology and Energy of the Saint Petersburg State University of Industrial Technologies and Design.

That kind of international activities and events could form a basis for developing cooperation between the existing innovation centers and technoparks, the implementation centers to be created on the both sides of the border and contribute to their further networking involving thus university students from partner universities into international innovation activities.

Nordic Nursing Medication Educators' Collaboration (MEDICO)

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Abstract

Nordic Nursing Medication Educators' Collaboration (MEDICO) was launched in 2011. There are teachers from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Estonia in the group. The main purpose of the MEDICO is to develop nursing medication education of nursing degree programs in the partner Universities. MEDICO has organized several Conferences and Intensive Weeks for bachelor and master level students during these years. The members of the MEDICO have created a valuable network with colleagues from Nordic and Baltic countries. MEDICO has meetings once or twice a year and there is a great possibility to share ideas with each other during those meeting days. MEDICO get funding from Nordplus.

Keywords: collaboration, network, development of teaching

1 Nordic Nursing Medication Educators' Collaboration (MEDICO)

Nordic Nursing Medication Educators' Collaboration (MEDICO) was launched during the 1st Forum Nurse Educators arranged in Rovaniemi, Finland 2011. Couple of teachers who were enthusiastic about teaching and medication issues decided to establish the MEDICO. By change there was a teacher from Iceland also and she want to join the group. After that, step by step the MEDICO had participants from all Nordic countries and Estonia also.

Nowadays 15 teachers from 11 different Universities and six different countries belongs to Medico-group and have met once or twice a year starting from 2011. There are teachers from University Collage Nordjylland (Denmark), Lapland University of Applied Sciences (Finland), Turku University of Applied Sciences (Finland), Arcada University of Applied Sciences (Finland), University of Iceland (Iceland), University of Akureyri (Iceland), Nord University (Norway), NTNU Norwegian University of Science and Technology (Norway), University of Gävle

(Sweden), Tartu Health Care college (Estonia) and Saimaa University of Applied Sciences (Finland) in the group. PhD Virpi Sulosaari from Turku University of Applied Sciences (Finland) have been the president of the MEDICO from the beginning, seven years. In this year, 2018 the president has been changed, MCS Eva Westergren from University of Gävle (Sweden) is the president of the group now.

MEDICO has taken part to organize Medication Conferences every other year. During last year's MEDICO has developed it`s collaboration. It has organized two times Intensive Week for master and bachelor students of nursing and teachers. First one was in Saimaa University of Applied Sciences, Lappeenranta (Finland) 2016 and the last one was in University of Iceland, Laugarvatn, Reykjavik (Iceland) 2017. The next Intensive Week will be in Ålesund (Norway) 2019. Next Conference will be in Lithuania arranged with Klaipeda State University of Applied Sciences, autumn 2019. MEDICO gets funding from Nordplus.

2 The Intensive Week in Iceland

The last course "Nurses' confidence in medication safety" was in University of Iceland, Laugarvatn, Reykjavik, in March 2017. The course took 1 week, 5 working days plus travelling days. Workload for students was 5 ECTS. 5 scheduled days (2 ECTS), pre- and post-course work (3 ECTS). There were over 40 participants, bachelor and master level nursing students and teachers in the Intensive Week.

During the course students developed their understanding and knowledge that exist in the field of medication. They gained a broad understanding of their own professional confidence and competence in drug administration and in medication safety. During the course teachers and students together examined the challenges for nurses in the health and social welfare that exist in this time of globalization and fast technology development. Every participant increased also multicultural understanding and knowledge.

The intensive course was targeted at bachelor and master level of nursing. The course aim was to provide an overview of meaning of the medication safety, what

does it consist from nurse and patient perspective and describe the situation of different countries. What is known about medication safety in different countries today and its possibilities and potential in the future. There are different forms of technology developed and in use and the implementation of this technology differs in comparison between different countries. Further, how technology is implemented, what are the possibilities, potentials and the obstacles? Ethical issues concerning technological approaches in medication administration were addressed during the course. The didactical framework for the course was blended learning which refers to a mix of different learning environments.

2.1 The objectives of the intensive course

The objectives of the intensive course were to increase students' awareness of registered nurse's role in medication safety and best practices and support students' assimilation of patient safety culture as a premise of safety in health care.

There were different goals for bachelor and master students. For example, bachelor student goal is to understand Registered Nurses role in medication safety in different countries and understand how each individual nurse is important in ensuring the safety of care. The goals for master students are, for example, to understand the responsibilities of the nurse leaders in development of medication safety and to analyze critically his/her own needs for professional development.

Teaching includes lectures, workshops, and individual as well as group assignments. The course language was English, and the literature was in English. The pedagogical idea in the course was Self-Directed Learning. In self-directed learning, the individual takes the initiative and the responsibility for what occurs. Individuals select, manage, and assess their own learning activities, which can be pursued at any time, in any place, through any means, at any age. Teaching emphasizes learning skills, processes, and systems rather than content coverage and tests. For the individual, self-directed learning involves initiating personal challenge activities and developing the personal qualities to pursue them successfully.

2.2. The didactical framework for the course

The didactical framework for the course was blended learning which refers to a mixing of different learning environments. It is a learning method that combines e-learning and social media with other forms of flexible learning and more traditional forms of learning such as face to face classes. Blended learning offers learners the opportunity "to be both together and apart". All students were divided into groups/teams. Group studies offered them the advantage of gaining a deeper understanding of the course. Effective study groups involved hashing out lesson materials together—explaining concepts, arguing about them, figuring out why one person's answer differs from another's—and in the process, everyone learned more than they ever would have studied by themselves The assigned teams were therefore very important for everyone's individual learning and were an important educational base for the different assignments during the course. As support all students had teachers coaching them throughout the week.

The teachers provided the prerequisites to fulfil the goals of the course. They planned and arranged lectures, workshops and group assignments in order to stimulate student`s learning, gave suggestions about literature, organized and made available communication tools and material via the web platform, arranged field visits as well as cultural activities. Teachers also red and reflected on the assignments. The course coordinators were responsible for giving all participants the opportunity to evaluate the course.

A prerequisite of the course was active learning where student was expected to acquire the necessary knowledge on their own or together with their peers in group work. The course included compulsory assignments and workshops where all participants were expected to exchange knowledge and experiences with each other. Students were expected to prepare themselves in studying the parts of the literature concerning the theme in question. They were expected to be active in lectures and in the reflective discussions at the workshops.

2.3 The themes of the course

Every day of the Course had own theme. In the first day were given Information, Introduction and Pre- Course Assignments Presentations, second theme was Medication Safety and Nursing / Safety Culture. On third day we got to know Icelandic culture and nature by bus tour. The theme on the fourth day was Interprofessional collaboration / Best practices in Promoting Medication Safety.

Workload for students was 5 ECTS. 5 scheduled days (2 ECTS), pre- and post-course work (3 ECTS). Pre-assignment was to describe the meaning of the medication safety (what does it consist from nurse and patient perspective) and describe the situation of students own country based on his/her own clinical practice experience about the medication errors and how they have been handled. Post-assignment was to write an article about experiences of the Intensive Week and critically reflect on what student has learned over the week and what kind of impact it had on him/her as a student.

The students feedback from the week was positive. They have had great week and they have had fruitfully conversations with each other during the workshops. They have learned a lot of similarities and differences of medication culture in different countries. The most important thing for students was possibility to get to know nursing students from different countries any way.

International student project

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Abstract

This article presents the joint project of Master students at the Saimaa University of Applied Sciences (SUAS) and at the St. Petersburg Financial and Economic University (FINEC, now St. Petersburg State University of Economics). The joint project was part of the course "Theories and Practices in International Business". Purpose of this study course was to provide the knowledge about international business environment, from theoretical and empirical point of view. The goal of the project was to extend the theoretical point of view but also to provide students the capability to work in an international environment and with people from different cultural background. This article presents project design, implementation, challenges and further development.

Keywords: joint project, internationalization, cluster

1   The project

The purpose of the joint project was to find out the potential for the development of Finnish-Russian cross-border clusters, especially in South-East Finland and North-West Russia. A cluster means "a geographically proximate group of interconnected companies and associated institutions in a particular field, linked by commonalities and complementarities" (Porter 2000). Clusters are considered to be a specific type of internationalization models and they are created in order to help companies in networking and achieving experience for international operations as well.

Teams in joint project included students of Master Degree Programme of International Business Management at SUAS and Master students of International Economics at FINEC. Arrangement of the teams was done under the guidance of the teachers: the project was introduced to the students and they were also able to request an industry they would like to analyse. Teams were

arranged based on the criteria: students' university (SUAS / FINEC) and the students' nationality, with the purpose of getting students from both universities and nationalities into each team. Altogether, there were a total of four teams, each with 4-5 students.

In the project, students had to identify the national competitiveness of Finland and Russia, after which the competitiveness of the regions of South-East Finland and North-West Russia was examined. Each team also analyzed the industry they had chosen: forest industry, food industry, logistics and information technology, or tourism. After an industry-specific analysis, students proposed a possible model for the formation of a Finnish-Russian cluster and its cross-border operations. Because part of the students in the teams were in Finland and part of the students in Russia, they communicated via email or social media (e.g. Facebook). Students living in St. Petersburg were also able to meet each other. The teams also had to plan the timetable for project, divide the work and responsibilities for each student. At the beginning of the project, students were given instructions about the issues they need to analyze; which companies in the industry should be studied, and what kind of a written report should be produced.

The time-table for the project was approximately three months. When the written reports were complete, they were presented in seminars at each university; a joint seminar was not organized. The reports were also published in a book: "Studies of Opportunities for Developing Russian-Finnish Transborder Clusters" (Rekord & Ikävalko 2011), printed at St Petersburg's Financial and Economic University and subsequently published both in Finec and SUAS. Teachers wrote introduction to the book and final reports were edited for the publication. The purpose was that the information analyzed and processed by the teams is also available for the other students.

Same project was organised again in the following year, and results were published in the international seminar organised at SUAS. Written reports were edited and published in publication at SUAS (Ikävalko & Rekord 2013).

2 Challenges

Several challenges were identified throughout the project. Working in a multicultural team creates challenges both for students and for teachers. Student groups in both SUAS and Finec were multinational, but the combination and arrangement of these students into smaller teams created truly multi-international study groups. Each student's cultural background and the certain working procedures influenced team dynamics. Similarly, a wider cultural and operational environment (e.g. the university procedures) influenced the project.

Project time-table was the first challenge. Three months is a good time for such a project, but problems were caused by a month-long Christmas holiday of the Russian University. The start and finish of the project were affected by the schedule of the universities, so flexibility could not be arranged easily. Schedules should be carefully considered in advance. Communication in small teams was also challenging, especially between students in Finland and Russia. Each small team had students from both countries, but communication between the students living in the same country was much easier. Cultural differences and the familiar procedures will definitely affect the issue. Even though today communication is mostly taken care with e-mail and social media, it does not necessarily go as well as expected.

Different habits of studying should also be taken into consideration as they have a great impact on the success of cooperation. Different pedagogical approaches in different countries and universities form a challenge in joint projects, as students have different learning skills. Due to the topic of the project, the background knowledge can be different in student groups. Students are also used to search information several ways and to use different kind of sources. It is relatively easy to collect information today, but depending on the university, the use of different databases and libraries may be challenging or even very difficult. In such a project, it is especially important to guide students to similar procedures, and at the same time, provide detailed advice on how to search information.

One of the challenges was also writing the final project report. Students had been given instructions on the structure of the report, but no other writing instructions

were given. Clear advice about how to use the sources and how to write references and citations in the text was not given, as it was assumed that students, through the practice followed by their own university, have learned how to do it. This was clearly the place of development; different universities and teachers have a different view on the subject, so a coherent and scientifically accepted procedure is not easy to identify. Clear and structured instructions on using sources should be provided to students; in order to have the consistent written project reports.

3   Conclusions

Joint projects are fruitful in many ways. A global and internationalizing society brings challenges for identifying multiculturalism and adopting different procedures; a truly international implementation of the study course enables both students and teachers to learn to operate in a multicultural environment. Quite often co-operation with the international partner university is usually type of student and teacher exchanges. By designing and implementing a joint student project, co-operation with the international partner can be brought to a more concrete level. In the implementation of the study courses, the best possible content and the way of teaching is always a challenge. In case of an international study programme and study course dealing with the principles of international business, what could be better way to approach the topic than the real project? Students and teachers in two different countries is certainly a challenge, but realistically describes the international environment.

This joint project provides international learning on many levels. First, the students participating in the project will work in a challenging situation (acquiring new knowledge) and cooperate with students from other countries and cultures. During the project, students will learn about different cultures, different backgrounds, and also different ways of working. Secondly, for universities this kind of project provides an opportunity to strengthen the cooperation with the partner university. However, primary objective is to educate graduates that are ready to work in international business with the knowledge of multicultural issues.

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Foreign Students in Higher School in Late Soviet Times and in Nowadays Russia: Routine and Peculiarities

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Abstract

The structure of groups with foreign students and the spectrum of represented countries were more or less standard in late Soviet higher school institutions and could be easily classified into two parts: the students from the Eastern Bloc and the students from "developing" countries: "socialist-oriented" states of the Third World, so-called "friends of the USSR". Foreign students studied and lived in their halls of residence jointly with their Soviet group mates, and in most cases this helped significantly to establish a really international spirit and relationship. Most of the foreign students in late Soviet times were integrated into so called fellow-countrymen communities. The idea of those associations of compatriots implied, besides strong ideological component, a better acquaintance and mutual assistance in different fields of their life and education. Full-time students from Western Europe and North America were very few and sporadic in higher school in the USSR before Perestroika, at the same time the groups of tourists from Western countries who wanted to learn some Russian language in addition to a standard tourist program came regularly in the early eighties already. The foreign students who come to study in Russia in recent years find that their daily routine and Russian educational system is not too dissimilar to the one they got used to.

Keywords: educational system, contingent of students, Russian as a foreign language

When my teaching practice as a teacher of Russian as a foreign language began in the early eighties (at Leningrad State University and then on regular basis at Leningrad Institute of Economics and Finance, now Saint-Petersburg State University of Economics) the structure of groups with foreign students and the spectrum of represented countries was more or less typical for the late Soviet times. The overwhelming majority of foreign students in Soviet higher school could be easily grouped in two parts. The first component was formed by the students from the Eastern Bloc (Central and Southern Europe, Cuba, Vietnam). The other component was comprised of the students from "developing" countries: "socialist-oriented" states of the Third World, so-called "friends of the USSR"

(Angola, Ethiopia and other African states, the Middle East, to a lesser extent other Asian countries and Latin America). In more special institutions like conservatoire or military academies the contingent of foreign students, their mutual relations and their goal-setting could vary significantly (see more: Shulgin 2016). In most of higher school institutions foreign students, after completing their preparatory two-semester course of Russian language, were assigned, regardless of their countries and according to the chosen specialty, to various groups with Soviet students (this practice for the most part has remained the same until now). Foreign students studied and lived in their halls of residence jointly with their Soviet classmates, and in most cases this helped significantly to establish a really international (or 'internationalist', as it was declared in those times) spirit and relationship and to advance their level of Russian language. Even the shortage of some basic things (like tea or fruit) could be a subject for getting together: when a package from home arrived the content was usually shared with group mates. Students from some countries (like Vietnam) mostly lived within their communities while students from Africa and Latin America were usually much more social and easily befriended with their group mates. Alongside with their education in higher school institutions and involvement in typical students' routine most of the foreign students in late Soviet times were integrated into so called fellow-countrymen communities. They were rather different in terms of quantity (from just several students to rather numerous ones, depending on the amount of students from a certain country who lived and studied in the same city at once), and the level of their activity could vary as well. The idea of those associations of compatriots implied, besides strong ideological component, a better acquaintance and mutual assistance in different fields of their life and education. In addition to my work as a university teacher I curated in the late eighties and in the early nineties two of such associations, Costa Rica and then Philippines. They consisted of about twenty students each but were rather different in their functioning. While Costa Rica community was relatively active (I remember how nervous I felt during my short speech in front of about a thousand of people: it was one of the national holidays of Costa Rica, and most of Latin American students who studied in the city of Leningrad came to greet their friends), the activities of association of students from Philippines were barely visible. Some years later I realized that most of the students from Philippines

could be the children of left-wing partisans who took part in the civil war of that time and were fighting against governmental troops. Probably they sent their children to get education in the USSR mainly for safety sake. Chances are that many of these students could study under fictional names.

Full-time students from Western Europe and North America were very few and sporadic in higher school in USSR before Perestroika, at the same time the groups of tourists from Western countries (UK, France, Western Germany etc.) and Japan who wanted to learn some Russian language in addition to a standard tourist program came regularly in the early eighties already. They arrived on tourists' basis and were being invited by "INTOURIST" travel agency (which nearly had a monopoly on organized foreign tourism in the USSR). Such language courses were primarily considered as a part of ideological work promoting Soviet lifestyle and the advantages of Soviet system and were managed by tourist company which allowed making the process of teaching rather flexible. Some of these "students" had serious interest in Russian/Soviet life, culture and language; some came here just for fun or even coincidentally. For example the group from France I taught in 1982 (being a university student myself) consisted of three rather different thirds: the schoolchildren who had studied some Russian language at their schools, the youngsters who wanted to avoid the military service (obligatory in France in those days) and the unemployed who could afford a one-month trip to the USSR (cheaper in case you study the language) on their welfare checks. I warmly recollect all those nice people (they truly attempted to learn something anyway) however it was one of the most difficult groups of students in my teaching practice indeed.

Everything started to change after 1985, with progression of Perestroika. The spectrum of countries that were sending their students to the USSR and then to Russia was stretching from year to year, and in the early nineties the students from Western countries did not seem a curiosity anymore. In addition to compact short-term groups from different countries who were (and still are) coming to study in our university on a regular basis (their terms of study may vary from one week to a semester or two and the intensity of classes varies significantly as well, from two to twenty hours per week), some students chose a standard full-time

program, for example, at that time I had students from Finland and Switzerland in my groups. Students' motivations have broadened out significantly as well (see more: Shulgin 2016).

In the nineties we probably went through the peak of popularity of the Russian language all over the world; I can hardly remember absolutely all the countries where my students were from but there were definitely more than fifty of them. Both full- and short-time students felt rather comfortable in Russia during that decade. Despite political instability (even unpredictability at times) and relative insecurity in everyday life the foreign students could usually afford much more than their Russian classmates. My student from Sri-Lanka in the early nineties got a monthly $50 support from her state, like all of the students from her country (and my monthly salary as a university teacher with PhD was – let it be told – about $20 at that time). In the mid-1990s one of our students from the USA had some business in Moscow and went there regularly from Saint-Petersburg by night train. To feel comfortable and safe he usually bought four tickets – the whole compartment – and it cost him $20 for the whole thing. The fact not only reveals the imbalance of prices and the value of hard currency in Russia at that time but also shows how relatively well provided for the foreign students could feel.

The foreign students who come to study in Russia in recent years find that their daily routine and Russian educational system is not too dissimilar to the one they got used to. Educational process, curricula and evaluation methods are becoming more and more standardized in accordance with the Bologna Process (a multidimensional and stressful procedure itself) (see more: Shulgin 2017). The contingent of foreign students becomes more homogeneous in terms of their lifestyle and cultural preferences. The students from my recent group from Japan were pleasantly shocked when they knew that their assistant – a Russian girl – is an active cosplayer. Most of the students nowadays study Russian as a second foreign language. Almost all of them speak English (at least on the basic level), and it helps students from different parts of the world to communicate effectively and simplifies the formation of the groups when new students arrive. The national specificities have not faded away altogether but they seem less prominent, at least on the surface. For instance, the students from the People's Republic of

China study with students from Vietnam, Japan or Taiwan. Not all of the combinations would work fine though. We try to avoid the inclusion of a sole student in a group of students with a dissimilar culture: he or she may simply get lost there. When we include a sole student from China in an otherwise European group it is important that his or her level of Russian language is at least one step higher than the others' so that the student may reveal his or her potential (see more: Shulgin 2016).

On the whole there are less and less problems in the educational process that are characteristic for foreign students in the first place. And when students want to get or to continue their higher education in Russia it is not a governmental assignment or a rather eccentric move anymore; it is just getting another valuable professional and life experience. All in all it's a small world.

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Accessed on 7 September 2018.

Everyday practices of integrating international students

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Abstract

Discussing the topic of integrating international students is by no means an easy and simple task. This is due to the fact that the international students have multiple different backgrounds and their degree of integration varies depending on their student status. Integration itself also happens on different levels from national level to individual level. This paper discusses the everyday practices used in facilitating the international students to integrate, assimilate and adjust to their new educational environment in Saimaa University of Applied Sciences.

Keywords: international students, integration, practices

1 Levels of integration

When arriving to their host universities in Finland, international students need to integrate on several different levels from national level to individual level. These levels can be described as a pyramid, or staircase, where each level is built on top of each other (see Figure1). Students need to adjust to a foreign country, with foreign language and cultural differences in the society and its way of conducting everyday activities.

The strategy of Saimaa UAS (2016) states that one of its goals is to pave the way for international students to Finland and to integrate them into society. The following chapters discuss some of the practices used to achieve this goal.
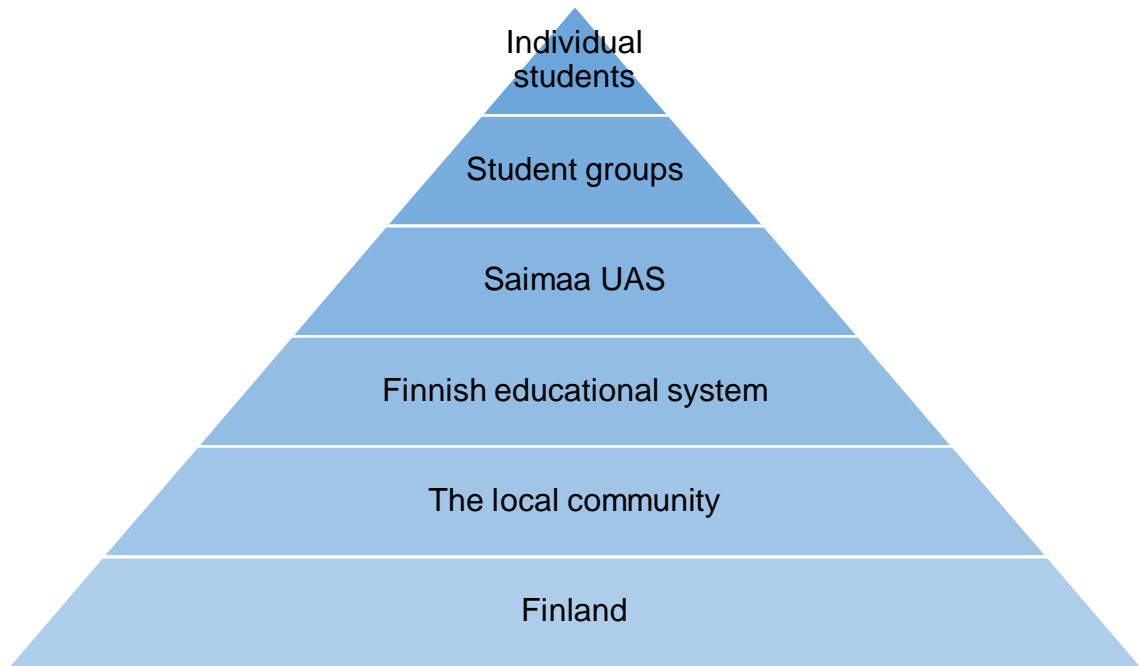
Figure 1. Levels of integration

1.1 Integration to the country and the local community

Integration to Finland starts with the integration of the foreign students to their local community in Lappeenranta. The UAS has a relatively small direct role on this level of integration, but indirectly it guides the students into contact with other operators and organisations in the town. For example, the city of Lappeenranta (20118) together with the student organisations and other local operators organise a welcoming event Jet Lag Off for the new university students. It is important the students feel welcome and part of the town community from the very beginning of their studies. In this event, the students can find the services offered by the town and look for interesting hobby opportunities.

International students coming to Saimaa UAS also have a chance to participate in the Meet a Local Family Programme, which brings together international students and South Karelian families. The aim is to help foreign students learn more about Finnish culture and family life. In return, the students give the host families a greater understanding and appreciation of other cultures. The programme is coordinated by the international office and conducted in cooperation with Lappeenranta University of Technology and the Evangelical Lutheran Church. (Saimaa UAS 2018)

The local parishes offer the international students also plenty of activities and events during the academic year. These events are open for every students regardless of their nationality, religion or denomination. Likewise, the university chaplain is working with all the students, providing counselling and arranging events. These activities organised by the parishes offer the students a way of meeting not just other international students but also local people and thus integrating into the local community.

An important part of the university education, which is also increasing integration to the local community and Finnish society, is the frequent cooperation with the local companies and other organisations. This is done via individual courses (course assignments, visits), project work, training and work practice as well as thesis at the final stage of the studies. (Holappa, Mirola & Yli-Kovero 2013, p. 53)

1.2 Integration to the Finnish educational system and Saimaa UAS practices

One of the challenges in the integration to the educational system id caused by the diverse cultural background of the incoming international students. Students need to be able to think outside the cultural features of their previous educational system. International students may face difficulties in adjusting to the Finnish teaching and learning practices and methods used on classes. In these cases, the role of support given by the teachers and tutoring is essential. Therefore, each student is assigned a so-called tutor teacher, who guides and instructs the students throughout their studies. This applies to both exchange students as well as degree students.

Integration is facilitated by organising an orientation week for new incoming students at the beginning of their studies. During those orientation days, the students are introduced to their new learning environment, facilities, student services, IT-systems used at the university, codes of conduct and other practical issues related to their studies. During then orientation, the incoming students also get to know their students tutors, who are senior students designated to help and support the new students especially at the beginning of their studies. They are

responsible for introducing new students to the university and the surrounding community, studies and recreational activities.

1.3   Integration to various student groups

Teachers use various classroom actions, actives and practices to make sure that the incoming international students have easy opportunities of grouping and mingling not just with each other but also with the Finns in the classes. It is essential to encourage the formation of multinational groups, since it cannot be assumed that students would automatically form groups consisting of different nationalities. In fact, quite the opposite: in multinational classes, small national groupings are typically formed unless otherwise instructed by the teacher. It must be emphasized that it is necessary to practice cooperation in multinational groups during studies because these skills are required in working-life today. (Mirola 2017, p. 155)

Peer support is a crucial element in the student integration process. The most important peer groups of the incoming international students are their "classes" such as IB18 (international business students who started their studies in the autumn 2018). Although the whole class may attend the same courses, it is more typical that a group of students who are taking any individual course includes students from other classes as well. Therefore, lessons, group assignments and projects on these courses provide the students with the opportunities to become acquainted and make friends with a wider group of students.

Student life consists not only of the studies but includes also their social life, free time, hobbies as well as family life and working life. However, in case of the incoming international students, their families and other support networks are usually far away. Therefore, also free time activities organised by the student union play an important role in the integration of incoming international students.

The student union (Saiko) and the student associations are bringing the students together via multiple different activities and events. For example, SaLUT Sports and Welfare Services is a joint project of Saimaa University of Applied Sciences and Lappeenranta University of Technology. Its aim is to promote and support the students' well-being and coping during studies. SaLUT includes a wide range

of sports and welfare services as well as organise a variety of demo classes and events.

Teachers are encouraging students to be active and join the offered activities, or even to organise an activity or event by themselves. As an example, there are groups consisting of students who share the interest towards some hobby such as cooking, video gaming or sports.

2 Degree of integration

Although there are several manuals and guidebooks written about the multicultural guidance of immigrants in Finland, these very seldom apply to international degree and exchange students and the everyday practical issues and situation they are facing in a foreign country and university studies (Mirola 2017, p. 156).

With international students, the degree of integration needed and achieved, of course, depends also on their student status (see Figure 2).

The international degree students, who typically spend 3,5 years on their bachelor studies, are almost as fully integrated in many respects as their Finnish counterparts. However, there is a lot of controversy about their integration to the Finnish working-life. For example, finding employment in Finland can be difficult, especially if you are not fluent in Finnish. Therefore, the importance of learning the language is emphasised and elementary courses on Finnish are usually compulsory. Advanced courses are offered for those who are committed to reach a relatively high level of Finnish skills even during their bachelor studies.

Double degree students are typically spending one academic year in their foreign host university, whereas the exchange students usually only stay for one semester. Therefore, although their integration to the host university is usually on a high level, the integration to the local community and Finland remains relatively moderate.

Short-term visiting students, participating on intensive week studies or international projects can be compared to tourists. During their few days' or

maybe couple of weeks' stay, they are usually well guided by the host university and follow the planned study programme and participate on organised activities as a group even on their free time. Therefore, minimal amount of adjustment is usually required.

Degree of integration		Up to a couple of weeks	Typically one semester	Typically one academic year	Typically 3 to 3,5 academic years
	Full integration				Finnish degree students
	High				International degree students
	Middle			Double degree students	
	Moderate		Exchange students		
	Low	Visiting students			

Figure 2. Degree of integration by time and student status

3 Conclusions

Whether the international incoming student is a short term visitor, exchange student, double degree student or a degree student, they all face the need to be able to adjust and integrate into their host country, local community, university and peer groups. The university, its teachers and other staff members do their best in facilitating this integration process. Students are also encouraged to take part if the activities organised by the town, parishes, local companies and organisations as well as the students organisations such as the students union and student associations. However, nobody can be forced to integrate. Therefore, incoming students should have and open mind and embrace the opportunity to learn about the way of life in their new learning environment and host country.

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