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EDITORIAL

The quality of higher education and in this context internationalization of higher education as well as other levels of education are one of the main topics of higher education consultations and policies in recent years. However, in the theoretical perspective and even more in practical dimension we are faced with several challenges and opportunities in inclusion of international and intercultural dimensions in (higher) education as an important element leading to improved quality of educational systems and in this context quality learning and teaching processes concerning all stakeholders – teachers, students, support staff, policy makers etc.

Increasingly intercultural world requires mutual understanding at local, national, international and global level with ethically aware individuals and responsible citizens. In this context also graduates' competences should meet the needs of the today's world, this is why the concepts of internationalization of the curriculum and internationalization at home are gaining their importance. Dealing with intercultural, international and global dimensions a number of challenges have to be addressed, especially in the light of quality teaching and learning.

Striving for constructive discussions, the subject areas of this year's conference addressed questions related to development of higher education teachers' competences with incorporation of the international and intercultural dimension. There were also papers addressing an impact of concepts internationalization at home and internationalization of the curriculum on the learning and teaching quality, as well as presentations on internationalization policies and strategies at national and institutional level to foster development of quality of learning and teaching. The impact of student and staff mobility in EU and other programmes was encouraged to be explored and presented in the context of quality learning and teaching with the aim to foster qualitative elements of mobility. Since international and quality dimension in education is present in the entire vertical line of education, the contribution of internationalization in primary and secondary education to the quality of learning and teaching at universities was encouraged to be explored and presented. All the above mentioned topics are in line with the in 2016 adopted Strategy for the Internationalization of Slovenian Higher Education 2016–2020, which exposes the following five strategic aims (Aškerc Veniger and Flander 2016, p. 10):

- mobility as a key component of the Slovenian higher education community, open to the international environment;
- quality international scientific research and development cooperation;
- promoting the development of intercultural competences;
- targeting priority regions and countries;
- promoting, supporting and monitoring the Strategy for the Internationalization of Slovenian Higher Education.

This publication consist of papers that were accepted for publication in the conference proceedings prepared by authors, who in addition to their field of research and according to the latter their pedagogical work with university students, want to develop and deeply explore the pedagogical practice and the concept of quality learning and teaching, including international dimension in higher education.

The international, national and institutional grounds for higher education internationalisation, as well as individual contribution are the key factors to the internationalisation of the study programmes and curricula for the medium and small universities, claim **Natasha Petrova Popovski** and **Marija**

Malenkovska Todorova in their paper *Impact of Internationalisation on Curriculum Quality*. Their analyses of the internationalisation impact on the curricula and study programmes result in findings that refer to the academic rationale for achieving international and global standards as a crucial benefit from higher education internationalisation process.

In the paper *Closing Institutional Internationalisation Gap at Slovenian Universities* the authors **Rasto Ovin** and **Nataša Ritonja** try to expose most essential fields of internationalisation, where Slovenian universities should close the gap to modern international universities. According to their research they claim that the Slovenian universities were subject to similar developments as the universities in the region of Central and South-Eastern Europe, wherein the authors evaluate the reached stage of development of Slovenian universities in the following fields: institutional form, the position and role of the faculty, arts of providing knowledge and competencies, relation to economic and social environment and the equipment of graduates for labour market needs.

Challenges faced by public universities in their efforts to be competitive through internationalisation strategies are presented in the paper *Challenges to Internationalisation through Foreign Students' Attraction – a Case Study of a Bulgarian Public University*. In their paper **Paskal Zhelev** and **Maria Peneva** investigate the internationalisation experience of one of the biggest and the oldest business universities in South-Eastern Europe. In conclusion, the paper gives some policy recommendations towards more effective internationalisation that authors consider useful also for other universities from the region in designing and implementing internationalisation strategies.

Siyka Georgieva Chavdarova – Kostova presents the intercultural dimension in teacher training determined by the specifics of the multicultural school environment, legal regulations, institutional university policy and personal activity of individual teachers. In this context, the paper *Intercultural Dimension in Teacher Training – Some Examples from Bulgarian University Practice* presents the integration of the intercultural dimension into disciplines at Bachelor and Master degrees at the Faculty of Education, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” in the last 15 years.

Concrete practice of collaboration within field course is the topic of **Dušan Petrovič's**, **Karel Kriz's** and **Klemen Kozmus Trajkovski's** paper entitled *International Joint Field Course as a Quality Improvement in Curriculum in Cartography*, where students from different countries, two master study programmes at University of Ljubljana and University of Vienna together with teachers from both institutions, experienced the joint field work excursion with project work at Velika planina, Slovenia. According to it the improvements in study curriculum and international cooperation, recognised by students were taken into consideration.

Another concrete practice in the contribution of mobility to internationalisation is the case of the paper *International Mobility – Opportunity for Collaborative Research and Student Centred Project-Oriented Learning and Training: a Case of Laboratory for Food Microbiology*, where **Meta Sterniša** and **Sonja Smole Možina** evaluate and analyse data on international cooperation for the time period of 10 years. Authors claim that optimal transfer of knowledge, skills and attitudes are enabled with intergenerational connection of staff, doctoral students as young researchers and students, which results in productive work and study during mobility, and thus high quality and publishable results.

Andrej Iskra and **Helena Gabrijelčič Tomc** discuss the possibilities of improving the teaching and learning processes by involving the international aspects in the field of planning and production of web and digital media. Their research was performed at three levels: teaching process by implementation and evaluation of different approaches of performing lectures, practical exercises and mentoring an individual and/or group project work; studying processes and learning by evaluation of the results of written or oral exams and final projects work and finally, analysis of the experiences and well-being of

the Slovene and Erasmus+ students attending the classes. *Evaluation of the Impact of Internationalisation on Teaching and Learning of Interactive Media Design* shows that effectiveness of teachers' work is influenced by the international dimensions, besides, students evaluated that their skills and knowledge considerably improved after the implemented courses.

We are especially grateful that during the conference several papers with concrete practice at micro level – lectures – were presented, including implementation of international cooperation between different countries, evaluation of current work in international environment, as well as more strategic papers at national and institutional level within quality and international elements were presented, which means that in practice international and intercultural dimension are actively included into pedagogical work in its broadest sense of the word with the aim to improve its quality. However, the opportunity for the improvements still lies in inclusion of qualitative elements also in the learning outcomes and competences, syllabuses, curriculum and other relevant strategic documents of the institutions to present their international practice also outwardly. Namely, a too widespread instrumentalization of internationalization, in practice focused to quantitative elements certainly cannot effectively and successfully lead to higher quality of learning and teaching process.

Katarina Aškerc Veniger

IMPACT OF INTERNATIONALISATION ON CURRICULUM QUALITY

Vpliv internacionalizacije na kakovost kurikuluma

Natasha Petrova Popovski¹ and Marija Malenkovska Todorova²

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the international, national and institutional grounds for higher education internationalisation and, as a key issue, the individual contribution to the internationalisation of the study programmes and curricula for the medium and small universities. The applied methodology follows the qualitative approach and is based on the analysis of the international, national and institutional impact, through individual endeavor, on the internationalisation of the curricula and study programmes. The analyses of the internationalisation impact on the curricula and study programmes resulted in findings refer to the academic rationale for achieving international standards, usually undertaken by the institutions to ensure high-quality global standards, as a crucial benefit from higher education internationalisation process.

Keywords: internationalisation; curriculum quality; global, national, institutional standards; individual endeavor

Povzetek

Ta članek je namenjen obravnavanju mednarodnih, nacionalnih in institucionalnih podlag za internacionalizacijo visokošolskega izobraževanja in, kot ključno vprašanje, prispevek posameznikov k internacionalizaciji študijskih programov in kurikulov za srednje velike in manjše univerze. Uporabljena metodologija temelji na kvalitativnem pristopu in skozi prizadevanja posameznikov analizira mednarodni, nacionalni in institucionalni vpliv na internacionalizacijo kurikulov in študijskih programov. Analiza vpliva internacionalizacije na kurikule in študijske programe je privedla do ugotovitev, ki se nanašajo na razloge visokošolskih učiteljev za doseganje mednarodnih standardov, ki jih njihove institucije običajno uvajajo za zagotavljanje doseganja visokokakovostnih globalnih standardov, kot bistveno korist procesa internacionalizacije visokošolskega izobraževanja.

Ključne besede: internacionalizacija; kakovost kurikula; globalni, nacionalni in institucionalni standardi; prizadevanja posameznikov

Introduction

Bearing in mind the most cited definitions of internationalisation of higher education this paper gives insight aspect of the impact of the internationalisation at home, especially when it comes to curricula and study programmes quality.

Internationalisation of higher education is the process which is realized by integrating the international dimension of higher education activities in various academic environments. These activities are based on specific geographic, political, socio-economic, cultural characteristics. Therefore, there is no one model that fits all, which means that the internationalisation takes different forms and dimensions according to the region, country, higher education institution, study programme.

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In an oft-cited definition of internationalisation of higher education, Knight (1993, p. 21) states:

“As time changes we perceive the higher education internationalisation, mainly, as student and academic mobility, but we also refer to internationalisation when it comes to attract as many students, professors, researchers as possible. On the other hand, the higher education internationalisation is also an export of academic systems and cultures, research collaborations, knowledge transfer, capacities’ building, study programme internationalisation, participation in international programmes, projects, virtual mobility, digital studying ...”

In the more contemporary definition Knight (2004, p. 1) also notes that *“the world of higher education is changing and the world in which higher education plays a significant role is changing. The international dimension of higher education is becoming increasingly important, complex, and confusing. It is therefore timely to reexamine and update the conceptual frameworks underpinning the notion of inter-nationalisation in light of today’s changes and challenges ... internationalisation at both the institutional and national/sector level. Both levels are important. The national/sector level has an important influence on the international dimension through policy, funding, programmes, and regulatory frameworks. Yet it is usually at the institutional level that the real process of internationalisation is taking place.”*

These Knight’s internationalisation definitions are additionally upgraded by Jos Beelen and Elspeth Jones (2015) ‘internationalisation at home’ definition, that states: *“Internationalisation at home is the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students, within domestic learning environments.”*

Starting from the point of deduction, the meaning of the internationalisation of the curriculum ought to be mentioned. This meaning is best described by Leask, B. (2015). According to her:

- *Internationalisation of the curriculum is the incorporation of international, intercultural and global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods and support services of a programme of study.*
- *It is an intentional, purposeful process, focused on the assurance of international/intercultural learning outcomes.*
- *These learning outcomes are important for all students.*
- *It is focused on outcomes, not inputs.*

The rationale for internationalisation, which stands for global academic environment as well as for Macedonian higher education institutions, is geared towards achieving international standards. These activities are usually undertaken by institutions to ensure high-quality standards, especially when it comes to achieving highest curriculum quality.

Purpose and aim of the paper

The purpose of this paper is to correlate the international, national and institutional grounds for higher education internationalisation and, as a key issue, the individual contribution to the internationalisation of the study programmes and curricula for the medium and small universities. The international, national or institutional grounds for higher education internationalisation have to exist, but the initiatives come from students, professors, researchers. The reasons why this paper is focused on these points lays on the fact³ that the small and medium universities are primarily oriented towards

³ Notion based on Macedonian practice.

teaching and applicative dimension of the gained personal skills and competences, where curricula and study programmes are the skeleton of the university functioning and all of the side activities (mentioned below) contribute to its internationalisation.

The aim of the paper is to mainly discuss the national and institutional experiences of higher education internationalisation. There are few examples of good practices and some of them are imbedded in St. Kliment Ohridski University – Bitola functioning.

National regulations

It is obvious that international grounds for higher education internationalisation influence the quality of curricula and study programmes. Mainly, Bologna process and set Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), are the most important factors that form the national higher education internationalisation strategy in Macedonia (MK) and, inevitably, they have to be pointed out.

The following elaboration of the national regulations, mainly focused on the national Law on Higher Education and its prescriptions, includes also authors' opinion and critical reflections on these matters.

Speaking of national grounds in Macedonia, there are few examples of good practices, that were incorporated in the Law on Higher Education⁴ and bylaws⁵ (The Guidelines and criteria for quality assurance and assessment of higher education institutions and academic staff in the Republic of Macedonia, The Rulebook on organization, functioning and decision making, accreditation and evaluation methodology and accreditation and evaluation standards and other issues related to the Higher Education Accreditation and Evaluation Board, Rulebook on compulsory components incorporated in the first-, second- and third-cycle study programme outlines) that regulate study programmes and institutional evaluation which have to comply with European standards. For instance, the current Law on Higher Education in Macedonia prescribes that the University/higher education institution has to sign at least two agreements for cooperation with foreign universities ranked among top 500 in integral Shanghai list or top 100 universities in accordance to MBA programme or top 200 universities in Shanghai list according to the adequate scientific field (Article 45). Those agreements, since the universities are predominantly teaching-oriented, inevitably have to encompass cooperation when it comes to organization and realization of parts of the study programmes, joint study programmes and/or visiting lectures. In addition to this there is a legal prescription for University/higher education institution to sign at least two agreements for issuing joint or double degree diploma with one of universities listed above. As mentioned before, European standards, i.e. Bologna process, are fully followed, so the Law further states that each of the study cycles has to comply with the ECTS system and one year of study should provide the student no less than 60 ECTS (Article 93). Also, the qualifications that students are being awarded after graduation are in accordance to the European higher education qualification framework.

Probably the most interesting law prescription, that directly influences study programme quality and is based on international grounds, is the following: "Study programme content has to correspond minimum to extent of 80 % to the contents and learning outcomes of same or similar study programme that is being realized at university ranked among top 50 universities in Shanghai list according to the

⁴ <http://www.pravo.org.mk/documentDetail.php?id=799>. Though, there is a process of conducting a brand new Law on Higher Education at the moment in Macedonia.

⁵ <http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/87B99DECCCAD546BAB1CE9C0BA7C0FE.pdf>, pg. 163;

<http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/612acf66cfa8493db048da196b76c83c.pdf>, pg. 67

adequate scientific field” (Article 94). Besides that, the obligatory study programme elements comprise of⁶: study programme title that has to be presented in Macedonian, but in English language, also in compliance with Frascati classification speaking of the study fields; explanation of study programme justification that has to presentiment both domestic and United Nations strategic documents; most important for our research focus – EU dimension of the study programme ought to be presented through a comparative review of the contents of at least three same or similar study programmes that are being realized at universities ranked among top 100 in Shangai list according to the adequate scientific field; then, regulations for students’ assessment, the manner students achieve and gain ECTS credits and the possibilities that refer to election of subjects at foreign universities; working positions that graduated students are being qualified for in accordance to International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) qualifications and many more.

In addition to that, the Law clearly instructs, that each of the study programmes, regardless of the study cycle, has to comply with the norms, standards and methodology accepted in European Higher Education Area (EHEA), which insures their comparability to same study programmes given by higher education institutions within this area.

The Law internationalisation feature reflects in other dispositions, too. So, it states, that the University/higher education institution is obliged to organize study stay (mobility) for minimum 30 of its students in a duration no less than one month, but no longer than three months at one of the universities ranked among top 500 in integral Shangai list or top 100 universities in accordance to MBA programme or top 200 universities in Shangai list according to the adequate scientific field (Article 100). Also, the University/higher education institution is obliged to realize visiting stay for 3 % of its academic staff per year at one of the universities listed above (Article 100).

Other legal article that has the internationalisation of higher education institutions as a main focus, is the one that obliges the institutions at least two of their study programmes for first cycle and at least four study programmes for second cycle to be delivered in English. Also, it is up to the higher education institutions to organize study programmes for third cycle fully delivered in English language (Article 103).

What is really important while speaking of curricula internationalisation, are the Law prescriptions regarding the external evaluation, which state that in order an equable quality of the higher education in EHEA to be provided in MK higher education, the accepted procedures and standards of European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) ought to be followed.

Moreover, these provisions are further developed in the National Board for Accreditation and Evaluation bylaws. The evaluation process, which consists of the institutions self-evaluation and external evaluation procedures, completely relies on the European standards and guidelines for quality assurance in higher education area. Though many of the described standards, that have to be implemented, are being adjusted to the national circumstances, still the main idea of ESG is definitely accomplished.

Institutional experiences and practice

Previously discussed national Law on Higher Education’s articles and bylaws are bases for institutional acts, experiences and practice speaking of internationalisation of study programmes and, therefore, enhancing their quality.

⁶ <http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/96633C22E9BEEF43B795F8DF33697B1E.pdf>, pg. 75

Some of presented legal prescriptions, although were prescribed, had a postponed implementation, but St. Kliment Ohridski University – Bitola, recognizing their value still follows what was written. This referred to provisions that every study programme should be benchmarked (in about 80 %) to same or similar study programme of the most highly rated universities on Shanghai ranking list. Not only that this measure contributes toward the curricula quality betterment through incorporating the newest teaching and learning methodologies and scientific achievements, but also, the similarity of the study programmes to the ones of the most recognized universities, widely opens the EU labour market gate to graduated students. This measure can be considered throughout the regulated professions' principle, i.e. curricula leading to internationally recognized professions.

Also, the bylaws from the Board for accreditation and evaluation of the higher education in MK state, that the study programmes and institutional evaluation are done in accordance to the ESG, which has a direct influence on the internationalisation of the study programmes, since all of the study programmes, in order to be positively evaluated, have to be structured and their content has to comply with the ESG.

Though the legal requirements were prescribed to enhance the Higher education institutions' internationalisation, many of them could not have been realized by the institutions. The main reason for that was the poor financial situation at domestic universities, since all of the financial repercussions were their burden. For instance, MK universities are not financially fit to cover all the expenses for organizing study stay for minimum 30 of their students in a duration no less than one month, but no longer than three months at one of the universities ranked among top 500 in integral Shanghai list or top 100 universities in accordance to MBA programme or top 200 universities in Shanghai list according to the adequate scientific field; or to realize visiting stay for 3 % of their academic staff per year at one of the universities listed above. Second, but not less meaningful, is the fact that the obligatory element could not have affected the foreign universities to sign the agreements for cooperation, for issuing double diplomas or for realization of joint study programmes. Furthermore, no one could oblige a foreign professor to give visiting lectures.

Facing many problems in reality which arose by prescribed legal articles, not only regarding the internationalisation, but for lots of other reasons, a brand new Law on Higher Education is in the process of preparation and widely spread discussion.

For the institutional grounds for internationalising the curricula and study programmes, this paper can focus only on St. Kliment Ohridski University – Bitola experience, believing that the same or close to that stand for other higher education institutions, too. Improvement of academic standards and enhancement of the quality of education and research in light of those of advanced Western countries and international standards, have become another strong driving force to promote internationalisation.

Discussing the suggested concept of the framework of the internationalisation of the curriculum by Leask and making comparison with the UKLO international curricula content, it can be concluded that these curricula are result of the global context, national and regional context (equaled to local context in MK), institutional context and knowledge in and across disciplines. Moreover, these contexts, not as independent influences, but interrelated as they are, cover the curricula as an umbrella and define its design (the correlation between them is the basic characteristic of the curriculum process design). In fact, the participation in various EU funded projects for higher education (TEMPUS, ERASMUS), where UKLO collaborated with many EU partner universities, enriched its study offer with most contemporary new study programmes, developed by using the best EU universities practices, their experience and expertise (global context). The process of internationalisation at UKLO is primarily manifested through

design and delivery of international curricula, as the most important aspect of the internationalized higher education systems. Dimension of curricula international variations serves primarily to give feedback to the teaching staff of institutions in order to have them the curricula, contents, infrastructure, delivery modes, etc. of academic education improved (knowledge in and across disciplines). It means that the global framework for their internationalisation is based on the content of the curriculum, students' ability for effectively working in different environment, such as international labour market, and staff's capacity for involvement of the international experiences and perspectives in their curricula (global context plus knowledge in and across disciplines). Additionally, the international content of the existing curriculum is gained through involving of courses with universal and international subjects, learning foreign languages, establishing courses which are emphasized on international issues. However, any international curriculum should be combined with a proper local programme and internationalisation should focus on the local and international circumstances (local, national and regional context). The study programmes, that are the result of university internationalisation processes and mostly outcome from the international projects and cooperation that follow the above mentioned internationalisation elements in full extent, are Mechatronics (Faculty of Technical Science), Entrepreneurship and SME Management (Faculty of Economics), Management of Tourism Sustainable Development (Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality), Farm Production and Agribusiness and Farm Production and Agro tourism (Faculty of Biotechnical Sciences) (institutional context).

The positive impact of internationalisation according to the creation process of the named study programmes is evident throughout the university procedure for study programmes preparation and acceptances till the very end, i.e. obtaining of accreditation and working permit (institutional context).

Unfortunately, Macedonian universities could no longer benefit from participation in TEMPUS projects in terms of using the best EU universities practices, their experience and expertise for preparation and realization curricula (national context). Macedonia, for more than eight years, is being placed as programme country in ERASMUS, but the real capacities of MK institutions do not comply with the role of these programme countries when it comes to internationalisation (MK institutions should rather receive than transfer knowledge).

It is worth mentioning that the activities that, more or less, directly affect the internationalisation of the study programmes and curricula, are undertaken by the individuals who participated in international projects or professors who completed study stays abroad. They realize student and academic mobility, participate in international programmes and projects, complete international research, initiate double or joint degree programmes, integrate international specialized literature as a tool within the courses they teach, transfer their knowledge and experience gained during the abroad academic stay, widespread use of English as language of instruction, publishing in international journals and series, the wide-ranging linguistic abilities of both teachers and students, widespread the domestic academic culture in the places they go (institutional and knowledge in and across disciplines).

UKLO experience with the individual participation in the international cooperation activities, especially with the international projects that resulted in several curricula, proved to be very positive. The professors, involved in this kind of cooperation, transfer their experience, knowledge and gained skills on every aspect of their work, but also on the work of their colleagues and, therefore, on the university work as a whole. This activity spreads in concentric circles and affects the University functioning in total (institutional and knowledge in and across disciplines).

The positive treatment of curricula internationalisation within the University was recognized by the team for external evaluation, realized recently, by European University Association – Institutional

Evaluation Programme (EUA IEP). Their opinion about this dimension is presented throughout several notes in the report, stating that broader view of internationalisation as an important driver for the day-to-day efforts ensure looking beyond internationalisation as an 'objective per se' and viewing it rather as an umbrella for the core functions of education, research, and the staff and student experience. It is clearly emphasized that the re-accreditation process for programmes had included a thematic element to encourage an increased European focus in the curriculum.

Conclusions and recommendations

The applied methodology, which follows the qualitative approach and is based on the analysis of the international, national and institutional impact, through individual endeavor on the internationalisation of the curricula and study programmes, led to the conclusions and recommendations.

As discussed previously, the national legal regulations obtain solid basis for institutional and curriculum quality internationalisation. There are several restraints that put some limitations to this. The conclusions and at the same time the recommendations at this point include the following:

- There is a need for international harmonization and global integration of the national higher education system. A promulgation of new acts for regulation of the joint degree and double diploma is required. Since the existing ones do not recognize foreign legislative (e.g. accreditations for mentors and possibility for professors' engagement on third cycle, diploma issuing procedure regarding its content) which makes it impossible for foreign regulations to be implemented or, even, agreed regulations to be presented.
- The national status of being programme, not partner country in the international cooperation, restricts the possibility for obtaining foreign experiences. This is especially important for Macedonia, because of the lack of sufficient capacities for knowledge and skills transfer, rather than accepting ones.
- Insufficient national financial and other support for institutional internationalisation processes (creating possibilities for higher education institutions international promotion and cooperation, academic and students' mobility, organization of international events, conducting international scientific research).

The understanding that internationalisation of higher education institutions adds competitive advantage drives to incorporate the international element, basically when it comes to the impact of internationalisation on curriculum quality. With regards to it the university curricula have been affected directly by international projects for cooperation, particularly by the experiences of faculty members who have participated in them.

The recommendations based on St. Kliment Ohridski University – Bitola experiences, that can imply to every other higher education institution, are that the good institutional practice of following the national prescriptions in regards to the internationalisation process should be maintained, if they contribute to enhancing the institutional internationalisation. Furthermore, infusing the disciplines with international perspectives and content, using comparative educational approaches, interdisciplinary studies, international activities through enhancement of interaction and by taking advantage of international funds, could boost the internationalisation dimension of the institution as well as its curricula quality. International interaction is seen as an essential factor for the quality of education. The higher education with an international dimension, the international curricula help in

producing graduates, who are internationally knowledgeable and cross culturally sensitive. This kind of education enables the students to work on the international labour market, which is guaranteed by the newest teaching and learning methodologies and scientific achievements incorporated in the international curricula.

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CLOSING INSTITUTIONAL INTERNATIONALISATION GAP AT SLOVENIAN UNIVERSITIES

Zapolnitev vrzeli institucionalne internacionalizacije na slovenskih univerzah

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Abstract

The paper tries to expose most essential fields of internationalisation, where Slovenian universities should close the gap to modern international universities. By using the literature on internationalisation the paper interprets contemporary values and goals of different kinds of internationalisation on higher education level. Using systemization of historical types of universities from the literature, the authors evaluate the reached stage of development of Slovenian universities in relevant fields: institutional form, the position and role of the faculty, arts of providing knowledge and competencies, relation to economic and social environment and as result of these items: the equipment of graduates for labour market needs. The results of the research prove that the Slovenian universities were subject to similar developments as the universities in the region of Central and South-Eastern Europe. In general, they were in the second part of the twentieth century developing outside the trends in the Western Europe and especially in the USA. We can note also positive consequences of staying outside of these trends – here meaning especially the accessibility of higher education for wider young population. On the other hand, practically every element that we analysed calls for reforms in the Slovenian higher education system. The authors believe that the reforms will have to start at the level of universities' independence. It seems to be misinterpreted on the state as well as on the university level. The state as prevailing owner in the field of higher education can only support the needed change in the field of accountable finance and with institutional support. All other fields of reforms will have to be initiated by the universities themselves so as to assure their appropriate mission and social acceptability in the future.

Keywords: internationalisation in higher education, historical types of universities, universities in transition countries

Povzetek

Prispevek poskuša opredeliti ključna področja internacionalizacije, kjer bi slovenske univerze morale nadoknadi vrzel v primerjavi z mednarodnimi standardi. Uvodoma avtorja izpostavi nekaj sodobnih pogledov na internacionalizacijo visokega šolstva. S pomočjo sistematizacije zgodovinskih tipov univerz iz literature avtorja ocenjujeta doseženo stopnjo razvitosti slovenskih univerz na področjih: institucionalne oblike, položaj in vloga profesorjev, način dela s študenti, odnos do razvoja družbe in posledično kompetence diplomantov glede na potrebe trga dela. Avtorja izhajata iz ugotovitev študij, da so slovenske univerze več ali manj delile izkušnje univerz v drugih državah srednje in jugovzhodne Evrope. To velja tudi za trende, ki so se bistveno razlikovali od izkušenj univerz evropskega Zahoda ali ZDA. Po eni strani je to sicer vključevalo večjo dostopnost za študij mladih generacij. Po drugi strani pa se je pokazalo, da vsak preučevani element zahteva reforme sistema visokega izobraževanja v Sloveniji. Avtorja verjameta, da je glavno področje potrebnih reform razumevanje neodvisnosti univerz in njihovega delovanja. Pokažeta, na katerih mestih si ga očitno napačno razlagata tako lastnik (država) kot tudi deležniki znotraj univerze. Pri tem država lahko nudi le institucionalno podporo in podporo na področju preglednih financ. Vsa druga področja reform bodo morala biti spoznana in reševana na ravni univerz samih – če bodo želele imeti od družbe priznано poslanstvo in sprejemljivost tudi v prihodnje.

Ključne besede: internacionalizacija v visokem šolstvu, zgodovinski tipi univerz, univerze v tranzicijskih državah

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Introduction

At the beginning of twentieth century, the shares of young population entering higher education were as a rule under 5 %. In last decades, this share mounted and in some countries even surpassed 50 %. This fact caused changes in universities' functioning in practically every field. One of the biggest was introduction of the Bologna model after 1999, which strives for inclusion of broader share of young population to the university and later in the labour market. This paper does not discuss the consequences of the Bologna declaration implementation in higher education systems of Europe. We share the view, that the Bologna process is replacing education with training (*Bildung statt Bologna* 2008). On the other hand, with introduction of ECTS system Bologna has contributed to student mobility that today is influencing internationalisation of the universities throughout Europe. Taken broadly the internationalisation means learning and sharing best practice, which is very important for transition countries of Europe who only recently became institutional member of the European higher education area.

The paper uses the literature on internationalisation to interpret contemporary values and goals of different kinds of internationalisation on higher education level. Using systemization of historical types of universities from the literature, the authors evaluate the reached stage of internationalisation of Slovenian universities. Here the main criteria used were institutional form, the position and role of the faculty, arts of providing knowledge and competencies, relation to economic and social environment and as result of these items: the equipment of graduates for labour market needs.

The results of the research prove that similar to the universities in the region of Central and South-Eastern Europe also Slovenian universities' development was influenced by historical, social and political environment, which was not in the favour of internationalisation. In general, they were in the second part of the twentieth century developing outside internationalisation trends in the Western Europe and especially in the USA. So practically, every element that we analysed could improve by introduction of international standards.

Despite clear differences to Western Europe, the Slovenian universities dispose over certain level of internationalisation referring mostly to mobility, while one could spot the gap in internationalisation in institutional sense. The state as prevailing owner in the field of higher education should enhance the needed change with institutional support.

The aim of this paper is to look for suggestions for enlarge the role of the university through institutional internationalisation. Numerous attempts to trigger faster adjustment to modern universities have in last decades hit the rocks of status quo obviously convenient for the coalition of stakeholders: politics, faculty and formal student organizations. In this way this paper addresses the aim of the conference 'internationalisation policies and strategies at national and institutional level to foster development of quality of learning and teaching'.

The paper starts with a literature review on internationalisation in higher education. Following is the presentation of used methodology and empirical phenomenon and later the application of Slovenian higher education system to historical systemization of types of universities. Defined are points and effects of lack of internationalisation on teaching and learning. Basing on their findings, the authors develop their suggestions for bridging the gap in the field of teaching and learning, which could be done with instruments of internationalisation.

Internationalisation in higher education

Internationalisation of universities has been pushed in the history by members of universities themselves following their mission of enhancing of universal knowledge. Following EPCCE (2015) or Altbach (1998) universities were always global. The era of transition from middle age to renaissance found “students and professors pilgrimaging not to Christ’s grave but to the university town, hoping to find knowledge, friends and leisure” there (de Ridder-Symoens 1992, p. 280). So it is no wonder that the European Commission named its leading higher mobility programme after Dutch philosopher Erasmus, who was known for his pilgrimages in the sense presented above. Such global orientation did not develop consequently in the history. Certain setback came with emerging of national states in 18th and 19th century, where Latin language has been replaced by national languages and international mobility became even unwanted. However, 20th century and especially the period after WW II brought back the necessity for internationalisation (de Wit and Merckx 2012).

Through fast development of trade, transport facilities and of course communication technology, the globalization also became a pull factor for internationalisation as internationally shared knowledge becomes a ‘condition sine qua non’ in most propulsive industries. Besides, with growing nationalism even in developed economies internationalisation of universities could be the factor that is awaking the importance of renaissance through academics and studying population.

As for definitions of internationalisation in higher education we will start with the definition by Knight (2004, p. 11), where the higher education internationalisation means the “process of integration of international, intercultural and global dimension in goals, functions or operating of higher education institutions”.

Looking at the internationalisation in a dynamic way we accept the requirement by Brandenburg and de Wit (2011, p. 17) who stress that in the field of internationalisation “a common commitment is needed referring to how we and our students will be prepared for the life and work in a global community”. According to our experience, we support de Wit’s (2011) view that the internationalisation should be focused rather on combination of competencies and processes rather than on activities and motivation. We believe that with the NAFSA (2014, p. 1) definition we are coming close to the original mission of universities: “Holistic internationalisation means planned and strategic integration of international, intercultural and global dimensions in the ethos and outcomes of higher education.” Finally we agree with Beelen and Jones (2015) according to whom comprehensive internationalisation in higher education exceeds the curricula level and refers to wide activities. Summarized by Hudzik (2011) it means international and comparative perspective in all fields of teaching, research and services of higher education. The authors have experienced online study and as presented by de Wit and Hunter (2015) they too believe that this art of study through virtual internationalisation will in the future contribute to internationalisation in higher education (Ritonija et al. 2016). It, however opens a new dimension, where institutionalized learning environment requires excessive ICT (Bruhn 2017).

In the literature, the distinction between internationalisation abroad and at home is made (Knight 2008; Beelen 2007). We have in our paper emphasised internationalisation at home as brought in discussion by OECD (1996) and Crowther et al. (2011) as we believe that this art of internationalisation addresses more questions relevant for European transition countries – the group that Slovenia belongs to. Internationalisation of curricula as most practised art of internationalisation here we understand in the sense of discussion by Leask and de Wit (2016) who understand the mission of curricula internationalisation as inclusion of teachers and students as global community rather than just being accessible to minority of students and staff. In this respect Beelen and Leask (2011) stress that

internationalisation as a holistic concept exceeds the didactical concept and must offer set of instruments, which could develop international and intercultural competencies of all of the students.

There is one more distinction between arts of internationalisation that should be made here. In industrial countries internationalisation is considered as a chance for developing the international competitiveness of their higher education institutions (often earning substantial funds from incoming foreign students). In transition countries such as the Western Balkans internationalisation should support reforms and institutional capacity building in higher education (Zgaga et al. 2013, p. 61). Therefore looking from the position of the European transition country we will not be able to completely follow and respectively apply the findings of studies on internationalisation. By considering wider international population of universities, from our perspective they do not enable insight into reasons and instruments for internationalisation in transition countries. So with EAIE (2015) development of education is top on the list of internationalisation effects, with Egron-Polak and Hudson (2016) in the foreground of internationalisation activities is outgoing students mobility, with EIS (2014) main concerns is employability of students (abroad). On the other side, elements, which are relevant for bridging the gaps in transition countries according the rankings of their importance, stayed behind in these studies. So, according to the Egron-Polak and Hudson (ibid.) just 16 % of responding universities quoted internationalisation as a part of their institutional strategy. The ranking of benefits of internationalisation by IAU (2014) starts with increased international awareness of students (32 % of respondents) and ends with benchmarking institutional performance according to international practice (3 %).

We could not align these findings with the experience and facts in the transition countries of Europe and Slovenia. Here development of universities after WW II was subject to state (party) directions, vulnerable equilibria between academics and political rule and using students as a control of developments at the universities. Seeking for equilibria between those three stakeholders clinched the development of the universities in these countries causing an additional burden to be overbridged in the course of reforms in higher education.

In transition countries, there is another reason for internationalisation of universities. Unlike Germany where considerable number of faculty in former GDR "Laender" was simply dismissed from universities and replaced by their western peers³, in other transition countries of Europe internationalisation of universities covered more or less limited areas. Typically, these were student exchange predominantly basing on outgoing than on incoming students, staff mobility following the same pattern and visiting and participating with international events. More deep cooperation refer to common development of study programmes (Tempus, Erasmus, CMEPIUS) or cooperation with execution of study programmes (dual degree, joined degree). According to the financial possibilities at different faculties staff is also participating at international conferences. Apart from this at bigger and better universities guest professors from developed countries have been engaged. All these actions no doubt influenced certain internationalisation of universities. However, they do not offset any university policy or represent systemic approach and are therefore prone to just support existing arts of teaching and learning and providing it with an outer shine.

Basing of authors' experience with Slovenia's higher education the most important arts of internationalisation of universities in Slovenia derive from inclusion of best practices at universities in market economies. They are: opening of teachers' recruitment process within the country and internationally; independent university also in the field of competences of leadership to award wages

³ Mostly criterion for lay-offs were membership or connection with GDR Stasi (East German secret police) but also inappropriateness of the field of teaching especially in social studies. This can be called as an art of internationalisation as faculty at Western German universities have been traditionally exposed to international standards.

to faculty according to their contribution to teaching and learning. However these are not the only fields that need reforms. The education policy wishing to bring Slovenian higher education in line with international standards will also have to consider issues of academic freedom, ethics and accountability.

Empirical phenomenon, methodology and research background

In this chapter, we will try to look for most striking characteristics of the Slovenian universities that demonstrate their sticking to old traditional universities no more relevant for today's social and economic environment and that remained or have been established due to lack in general and especially institutional internationalisation. To get the gaps exposed most clearly, our approach will be based classification of historical types of universities (Ovin and Cajnko 2016). We will look for proximities with obsolete features of universities in history that have been surpassed at modern universities and will through them evaluate the lagging of Slovenian universities due to lack of internationalisation.

In the literature, types of universities have been presented from different perspectives – from historical perspective and classification, over types of universities referring to their role in a modern society up to student guides explaining the nature of universities that may draw their attention. Hills (1995) systemizes universities from historical perspective in relation to their most typical features. Demeulemeester (2009) discusses the influence of motivation of stakeholders on universities development. Audretsch et al. (2016) discuss the role of universities in modern social and economic environment. As a typical guide for students here we quote *The Good Universities Guide* (2018).

In this paper, we will use the classification as presented by Hills (1995), as it allows the best identification of the present features of Slovenian public universities with the features of different types of universities in historical perspective. According to the author from the historical perspective, types of universities could be systemized as shown in the *Table 1* below:

Table 1: Historical types of universities by Hills (1995)

<p>1. NAPOLEONIC MODEL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ State dominated ➤ Grandes Ecoles ➤ Ecoles Polytechniques ➤ Training and education of administration elites ➤ National ➤ (Paris model) 	<p>2. HUMBOLDT MODEL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Subject dominated ➤ Research dominated ➤ Professor dominated ➤ PhD important ➤ International ➤ Know-what
<p>3. ENGLISH, OXFORD MODEL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Student centred ➤ Elitist ➤ Small colleges ➤ Whole persons ➤ Personal relationships ➤ Tutors ➤ (Bologna model) 	<p>4. SCOTTISH-AMERICAN MODEL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Utilitarian ➤ Market driven ➤ Industry focused ➤ Emphasis on independence, innovation and technology transfer ➤ Non-elitist, pluralistic ➤ Know-how

The types of universities as presented in the table above can be evaluated from several perspectives. In the *Table 1* above, they are listed according to a time perspective. Next possible distinction could be between three more or less elitist types (Humboldt, Napoleon and English model) and utilitarian Scottish-American model. Especially Humboldt and English - Oxford model have been a typical benchmark for top universities in Slovenia. However, with changing student population (in last years the share of young population entering higher education mounted to around 50 %) optimum learning outcomes require pluralistic universities, where Scottish-American model seems to be most appropriate (Ovin et al. 2017).

The thesis of this paper described in the title as well as the research itself is founded on a decades of experience of teaching on top Slovenian universities and participation in national and international expert systems in the field of teaching and research. Along with experience gained with acting on top university positions this expertise combined with study and teaching abroad has enabled the leading author to discuss and compare Slovenian and international experience in Western Europe and USA as well as CEE transition countries. Additionally basing also on leading author's own experience at private business school together with the co-author acting on management position on this school the authors believe they are indebted to the academic environment to expose the gaps spotted in public higher education in the field of teaching-learning and research and that are the consequence of missing internationalisation opportunities. The sub-thesis of the paper is that internationalisation is not achieved just with top-down rules and laws, but must (similar to Zgaga et al. 2013) grow out of academic curiosity and seeking for best practice especially by the faculty to be learned at good universities. The results from transferring the practices at home universities will then exceed the results deriving from the practice promoted by individual teachers and students participating in international exchange schemes. It is national policy, which should show the interest to bridge the gap that everybody is aware of, and should not surrender to the shine of short-term interests for keeping the equilibria between present representatives of the stakeholders.

Comparative evaluation of Slovenian universities

There are several facts that allow the statement that prevailing type of Slovenian public university demonstrates most characteristics of outdated Napoleonic and Humboldt models and none from elitist Oxford model or from utilitarian Scottish-American model. Here are some facts that underline such statement (to compare with Ovin and Cajnko 2016).

Rather as in the sense of its volume, the insufficient internationalisation is a consequence of almost non-existing processes of inclusion of element of modern universities. Almost as a rule the faculty as well as representatives of universities did not bring or include new ideas after returning home after visiting foreign universities. This might be a consequence of 'splendid isolation', where university staff and to certain extent students enjoyed rather privileged position in society even more so after the beginning of transition. Typical elements of these privileges were relative high wages by professors including honorary fees, while with the students the number of possible repetitions of individual exams mounted to 5–8 attempts, which is not compatible with normal practice.

First, we are exposing similarities to Napoleonic model as presented in the *Table 1* above. These are:

- *State dominated* – the state and respectively ministry of education and science in charge defines most financial parameters on financing of universities and programmes and partly enrolment quotas. Professors are included in public servants payroll system, the university has no instrument to carry out wage policy according to professors' contribution to teaching and research.

- *Training and education of administration elites* – the data of unemployed graduates in Slovenia shows the overhang of graduates in economics and business with the university degree. So in 2013 833 job seekers of this profile were faced with 230 open positions (Morfejork 2016). However, at the same time the employers seeking for selling personnel have been complaining that they cannot fill open positions due to insufficient supply (Moja zaposlitev 2014). This implies that the graduates of business and economics are awaiting rather administrative jobs related to their study, and are not considering selling skills to be among the competencies they should command when entering the labour market.
- *National* – Prevailing of national criteria means lack of internationalisation ‘*per se*’. The first example refers to faculty recruitment system. The candidates to teach at the Bologna graduate level must obtain the professor title (assistant, associated, full). Disregarding of his or hers achievements an internationally acknowledged teacher cannot be directly included in the programme if he (she) cannot prove the compliance with the election criteria valid in the Slovenian higher education system. Second, typical for Slovenian faculty is the art of recruitment causing “intellectual in-breeding”.⁴ It is quite normal that a person elected as a full professor at certain faculty (programme) did his or hers bachelor degree, master degree, PhD degree and was promoted from the level of an assistant up to the full professor (tenure) title at the very same department - faculty. After nineties, the younger generation faces much more chances to study abroad, but still often follow the path traced by their predecessors.⁵ This of course brought quite particular understanding what academic freedom at the university is. Third, the Law on higher education prevents courses or programmes to be taught in English unless the same programme is available also in Slovenian language.

The (traditional) Humboldt type of university is highly prized in Slovenia and the programmes (faculties) who hold themselves as top quality institutions, like to promote themselves through characteristics of this model. However, carrying out of this original model very often refers to ancient practices, demonstrating that there has not been much internationalisation – adjustment to practices, which (in Germany) brought declinations from original form of this type of university. So due to lack of internationalisation – here meaning considering and following best international practice Slovenian universities remained stuck in elements of this university type, which are today no more appropriate. These features are:

- *Subject dominated* – unlike typical modern approach to course formation according to the needs and interests of labour market and students, prevailing is the model of untouchable disciplines that are compulsory part of the programme regardless their relation to competencies asked for at the labour market.
- *Research dominated* – apart from being an important feature when ensuring the growth of young universities, especially with the promotion to higher professor titles their research performance plays a decisive role. It is valued strictly according to bibliographic criteria with clear focus on publishing in top international journals and often have only poor connection with teaching. In this way, teaching and learning must give way to research interest and

⁴ The intellectual in-breeding is probably the most important and quite strongly embedded factor that has been preventing internationalisation in the sense of introducing best practices from abroad. Although it may be considered as most comprehensive, the study of Zgaga et al. (2013) however, does not address this problem.

⁵ The first author often acts as an outside evaluator of universities. Two years ago he met also with a group of young researchers – assistants at probably the best university department in Slovenia. Asked why they are not doing their Ph.D. studies abroad despite the possibilities to do so, they responded, that they do not expect to get better education abroad than at home.

obligations of faculty thus neglecting base Bologna principles of instructing students in the sense of learning and problem solving.

- *Professor dominated* – academic freedom of professors does not refer only to the field of their research but often also means impersonation of the course they teach. There are no functioning mechanisms to force a teacher to innovate their courses or to adjust its content to the modern teaching standards. The student polls are however gaining on their importance, but are seldom used as a mean of promotion or degradation of professors.
- *PhD important* – the PhD is the necessary condition to follow the path of the professor title. Therefore, it is not possible for the top practitioners to perform independently as lecturers in the courses.⁶

There are almost no similarities that could be assigned to the Slovenian public universities referring to two remaining models in the *Table 1*. Through the form of ‘dual study’ there is cohabitation of university and professional study at Slovenian universities. With exceeding 50 % of present young generation in higher education institutions (2017), high standards more or less remained with more demanding ‘university study’. With one third to more than half students of (formally) practice oriented ‘professional study’ at different programmes/faculties performing these programmes and with practically the same teaching staff as for university study, it is easy to presuppose that to avoid bigger dropout lower criteria with study obligations and evaluations with these students are used.

Some elements of English and Scottish model are rather found at private higher education institutions. Here we mean stricter teaching and learning standards offset in care for competencies – demonstrated with high-developed tutoring system at some institutions. From the Scottish model one could recognized market driven strategy of private higher education institutions as they are mostly taking student fees and do care for market response to their programmes. Next recognizable feature from the same model surely is also non-elitist, pluralistic approach deriving from the fact that at these institutions predominantly professional study programmes are carried out.

Academic freedom, ethics and accountability as important internationalisation gap

The above elements showing internationalisation gap with Slovenian universities do not incorporate academic freedom, ethics and accountability. It is not the problem whether or to what extent they exist or not. Real problem is how they are understood. This understanding on the side of all stakeholders represents another gap where internationalisation is urgently needed. To understand the issue better, we are here presenting some key points, which have influenced the present social environment for academic freedom, ethics and accountability at Slovenian universities. They are:

- The SEE as well as Slovenia have been geographically dislocated from centres of social, democratic, science and technology development in the past. This also contributed to the environment, which shows systemic aversion towards change and inclines to non-merit privileges.

⁶ Trying to cope with this deficiency the leading author when still at public university tried to internationalize the practice in this field. Introduced was the title of a “guest expert” and at his present Business School the title of “guest lecturer”. In this way, business practitioners can be introduced fully into the lectures, but must following the law be accompanied with a teacher with corresponding title. The additional cost for the university is avoided through the readiness of the practitioners to perform their teaching free of charge.

- For 45 years (1945–1990) the stakeholders at the university (teachers and students) were controlled and trimmed to support the communist party line in exchange to special position in society (salaries, non-transparent financing, student social nets and privileges).
- Gradual and half-hearted reforms in the years of transition left out the universities from reform attempts. Unlike businesses and even politics who had to adopt to market risks, the whole public educational system succeeded in preserving and even in strengthening the status quo inherited from closed society.

Therefore, it is not difficult to understand that the need for adopting international standards at universities in Slovenia was not strong or in some areas were not present at all. The fields referred to in this chapter are calling for institutional internationalisation so as to establish the role of university in Slovenia according to its aimed contribution in the field of teaching, learning and research. For individual fields these gaps can be presented as following:

- *Academic freedom*, which basically refers to research and teaching plus learning methods, is often misunderstood and has been stretched to the personnel and financial area. The systemization of positions at the university is practically non-existing and so instead of leaving to the labour market young assistants succeed to build their positions up to the professor title. In this way the chairs are filled with professors and have no funds to keep lower titles to work with the students – they are recruited from best graduates and paid in a form of precariat. Besides an additional wage-promotion trimmed to public servants basing on the time spent at the university and with no connection to their performance system has been introduced and promoted by trade unions and are sometimes endangering the department/faculty financial position.
- Ethics has surely many faces, but when talking internationalisation gap we mean the relation between university and most productive faculty. There are several cases where individual faculty is promoting themselves over the university, using its name, overheads and are being paid a complete salary. Often they establish private institutes through which they offer their knowledge and are comforting the university with negligible sum of earned money if any at all (Ovin and Malgaj 2018). In this way the situation reminds on the environment of ‘rich professors at poor university’.
- Next field where an obvious lack of institutional internationalisation is present is accountability. Unable to solve the issue with introduction of international practice with public financing of the universities the country has recently been faced with weird situations in the case of mismanagement of taxpayers’ money.⁷

We believe it is the task of the state policy to bring all of the stakeholders to the table and together with them set minimum standards and respectively legislative for the named fields. When correctly presented with international standards and practice the university agents will recognize that existing standards should be changed.

Concluding remarks and suggestions to bridge the internationalisation gap

Deficient internationalisation not surpassing limited internationally financed schemes does not influence only teaching and learning processes at the universities in the region. There is also the lack

⁷ After disclosure of inappropriate and illegal honorary fees and other payments to individual deans and professors by the application »Supervisor« in 2015 and in 2016 the scandals were relativized by academia and eventually vanished from the media. The University of Ljubljana even brought the editor of the application to the court for violation of the ‘secrecy’ of data principle.

of academic culture and responsibility demonstrated through weak participation of intellectuals in Slovenia and in the region in public discourse. Being a member of the university still does not seem to mean predominantly the responsibility to act publicly as an independent mind. What seems to have attracted people in transition times to join the higher education, was probably better job security in the times of massive lay-offs in business, long paid holidays, high earnings in the time of excessive vocational pay study programmes offered by public universities and the opportunity to use university brand for lucrative private business (Ovin and Malgaj, *ibid.*). It is obvious that such values along with the facts presented in this paper send the wrong message to studying young population and represent quite hostile environment for change and for adoption of best international practice.

Basing on findings and statements in this paper we believe that the internationalisation gap should be bridged with the help of institutional adjustment – internationalisation meaning transferring best practice from best universities in developed countries. It consist mostly of bigger autonomy and responsibility that should be granted to the university in the following fields:

- Defining the disciplines – in accordance with university strategy - that means bigger inside autonomy in relation to the programmes/faculties.
- Recruiting the staff that in the best way support the vision and mission of the university.
- Financial autonomy:
 - o in the sense of the distribution of the funds between programmes/faculties according to the university strategy;
 - o in the sense of financial rewarding of the faculty according to their overall contribution to the growth of the university.
- Redefining the role of the rector/president of the university – the rector/president should be the top leader with broad personnel and financial competences and responsibilities. It has shown that despite they have been elected democratically the university leaders coming from top researchers and teacher could often not cope with areas such as programmes integration, finance and recruitment. Therefore, there should actually be two top leaders of the university with president's function combined with the function of provost.
- Introducing and maintaining higher ethical and accountability standards where the university leadership would hold all competences and responsibilities.

At the end, we want once more to stress the fact that internationalisation of just teaching and learning at universities in transition countries cannot be an isolated objective. We believe that effect of existing and needed instruments and measures of internationalisation will emerge only with the change of attitude towards international best practice of functioning of universities. In this way, as already stressed, it is the task of the state (as an owner of public universities) to correctly present the stakeholders at the universities with international standards and practice in the way that the university agents will realize that existing standards should be changed.

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CHALLENGES TO INTERNATIONALISATION THROUGH FOREIGN STUDENTS' ATTRACTION – A CASE STUDY OF A BULGARIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY

Izzivi za internacionalizacijo, ki temelji na privabljanju tujih študentov – študija primera bolgarske javne univerze

Paskal Zhelev¹ and Maria Peneva²

Abstract

The purpose of the paper is to identify challenges faced by public universities in their efforts to be competitive through internationalisation strategies to attract foreign students. First a literature review elucidating the most important factors for successful internationalisation is made. We then use a case study research method of analysis based on investigating the internationalisation experience of one of the biggest and the oldest business universities in South-Eastern Europe – the University of National and World Economy. The results based on a survey among the foreign students' population and experts' opinions show the achievements and competitive advantages of the University but also expose the disadvantages and the problematic issues. Finally, the paper concludes with some policy recommendations towards more effective internationalisation that might be also useful for other universities from the region when designing and implementing internationalisation strategies.

Keywords: internationalisation, higher education, international students, public university

Povzetek

Ta članek je namenjen ugotavljanju izzivov, s katerimi se srečujejo javne univerze pri svojih naporih za ohranjanje konkurenčnosti s pomočjo strategij internacionalizacije, namenjenih privabljanju tujih študentov. Najprej smo v pregledu literature osvetlili tiste najpomembnejše dejavnike za uspešno internacionalizacijo. Nato smo uporabili raziskovalno metodo študije primera, ki temelji na analizi izkušenj z internacionalizacijo na eni največjih in najstarejših poslovnih univerz v jugovzhodni Evropi, tj. Univerza za nacionalno in svetovno ekonomijo. Rezultati, ki temeljijo na podatkih, zbranih z anketiranjem populacije tujih študentov, in mnenja strokovnjakov sicer kažejo na dosežke in konkurenčne prednosti univerze, a po drugi strani tudi razgaljajo njene pomanjkljivosti in težave. Zaključek članka vsebuje nekaj političnih priporočil za učinkovitejšo internacionalizacijo, ki bi lahko bila tudi drugim univerzam v regiji v pomoč pri oblikovanju in izvajanju strategij internacionalizacije.

Ključne besede: internacionalizacija, visokošolsko izobraževanje, mednarodni študenti, javna univerza

Introduction

Rising globalization is exerting significant influence on the higher education sector and radically transforming its landscape. Since the world is becoming more economically, socially and culturally interdependent, universities are invoked to educate students who are prepared to interact effectively with individuals and organizations from other cultural and national environments. Globalization therefore changes the professional requirements for graduates which already include not only academic knowledge but also multilingualism, social and cultural skills and attitudes (Qiang 2003, p.

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248). Besides the increased importance of diversity and multiculturalism, the unfolding globalization has greatly heightened the competitive pressure and made inward-oriented business models (typical for long established public universities) unsustainable. Competition for talent has become more intense than ever before. While studying abroad is not a new phenomenon (ever since the foundation of universities students have been travelling outside their home countries to study) in recent decades it has grown immensely. The OECD has estimated that the number of foreign students engaged in tertiary education programmes worldwide has exploded within a generation, rising from 0.8 million in the late 1970s to 4.6 million in 2015 (OECD 2017a, p. 287). However this increased flow of international students is highly concentrated as some countries are more attractive than others.

In this context of rising globalization universities worldwide are responding to the challenges posed by increasingly adopting internationalisation strategies in order to stay current, relevant and competitive not only on the international but also on the local higher educational market. One effective way to internationalisation in higher education is by attraction of foreign students. In fact, international students' participation is one of the most widely used indicators for successful internationalisation of universities.

According to the OECD, student mobility is of great interest to governments and university leaders alike. From the government's perspective, higher inflow of foreign students provides increased access to an international talent pool during the course of study and after graduation. From the university's perspective, more international students provide increased funding in terms of tuition fees, and international diversity contributes to the dynamism of an educational programme which in turn fosters an attractive environment for talented students and academic staff (OECD 2017b, p. 111). International candidates bring along international pool of knowledge, cultural and social capital and former institutional associations which they can make available to boost international engagements of their home institutions (Klemenčič 2017). Therefore, recruitment of foreign students is not only an important factor for universities' income, it aids internationalisation of teaching and learning, and subsequently helps increase quality of education and attractiveness for both local and international students willing to immerse into multicultural setting. On the other hand, De Wit (2011, p. 2) points that as education offered in English is regarded as the equivalent of internationalisation, that might result in an insufficient focus on the quality of the English spoken by students and teachers for whom English is not their native language and thus leading to a decline in the quality of education. Furthermore, the commodification and commercialization of education programmes (Knight 2013, p. 88) represent another significant risk arising from internationalisation intended for profit that might hurt quality of education. Thus the challenges related to internationalisation should not be underestimated.

Despite possible downsides, for countries under conditions of ageing population with declining number of local graduates from high schools, attracting foreign students represents an opportunity to increase selectivity and may ensure that more capable people are enrolled thereby supporting the quality of teaching and learning process. That has a long-term reproducible effect on the institution's competitiveness as talent tends to attract more talent, to win reputation, to gain financial resources. Still we need to stress on an important qualification about the relationship of higher number of incoming international students and the quality of education and respectively the competitiveness of the institution. This positive connection holds true only if certain minimum preconditions are met:

- The foreign students should go through the same rigorous selection process as local students in order to make sure that only qualified candidates are accepted and not just anyone from abroad who is willing to pay the tuition fee. If universities are focusing only on attracting foreign students because of the higher fee that they pay neglecting their eligibility based on required skills and knowledge, actually this might lead to deterioration of the quality of delivering the educational services at the institution.

- In order to maximize the opportunities of direct interactions and cross-cultural learning of the presence of foreign students on the campus and foster the creation of multicultural environment with all the ensuing benefits the institution should ensure that the foreign students are fully integrated in the university's daily life.

The purpose of the paper is to identify challenges faced by public universities in their efforts to be competitive through internationalisation strategies to attract foreign students. First a literature review on internationalisation in the field of higher education with an emphasis to recruitment and hosting of international students is made. The most important factors for successful internationalisation are elucidated.

We then use a case study research method of analysis based on investigating the internationalisation experience of one of the biggest and the oldest business universities in South-Eastern Europe (SEE) – the University of National and World Economy (UNWE). This university can be viewed as a representative for the region state-funded higher educational institution with a very high local reputation that is located in a country from the EU periphery – Bulgaria. Peripheral are countries without a significant inflow of foreign nationals or with rising emigration. The internationalisation approaches differ notably between the higher education institutions located in the centres and those located in peripheries due to the differences in attractiveness of countries - institutions in peripheries need to put much more effort to brand themselves internationally to attract foreign talent (Klemenčič 2017).

A combination of two methods for collecting primary information was applied: structured interviews with representatives of foreign students (based on random selection of respondents including three fourth of the total population of foreign students at the UNWE) and in-depth interviews (expert opinions) with experts from the UNWE's International Students Sector. The results show the achievements and competitive advantages of the university but also expose the disadvantages and the problematic issues. Finally, the paper concludes with some policy recommendations towards more effective internationalisation that might be also useful for other universities from SEE when designing and implementing internationalisation strategies.

Definition, scope and rationale for internationalisation

One of the most widely used definitions of internationalisation of higher education is provided by Knight (2003, p. 2): "Internationalisation at the national, sector, and institutional levels is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education." A more comprehensive definition is given by the American Council on Education: "Internationalisation is a strategic, coordinated process that seeks to align and integrate policies, programs, and initiatives to position colleges and universities as more globally oriented and internationally connected institutions." (American Council on Education, n. d.).

Another definition, that focuses not only on injecting an international dimension into an existing static structure but calls for institutional transformation, is offered by Hawawini (2016, p. 5): "Internationalisation is an ongoing process of change whose objective is to integrate the institution and its key stakeholders (its students and faculty) into the emerging global knowledge economy."

A key term in all three definitions is "global". In fact, many researchers believe that universities increasingly adopt internationalisation strategies in order to respond to rapid globalization. As globalization continues to transform the way we learn, live and work, universities are confronting the challenge of educating new generations of students who are ready to interact effectively with individuals and organizations from other cultural and national settings (Cabrera and Le Renard 2017).

In order to capture the contents of the complex and multifaceted concept of internationalisation of higher education we have explored 25 internationalisation strategies of top-ranked business universities across Europe that are available on the official websites of the institutions.

Based on that we have identified several facets of internationalisation of higher education:

- academic cooperation with foreign partners;
- internationalisation of the curriculum;
- attraction of foreign students and lecturers;
- mobility of exchange students and academic staff;
- international collaboration in research activities.

These elements are present in one way or another in the process of internationalisation of each of the analyzed academic institutions, yet some of them are not clearly stated in the universities' strategies. This is due to the fact that these categories are intertwined and mutually complementary, and that each university, depending on the specifics of the environment in which it operates and according to its strategic priorities, decides which ones to emphasize more or less in the short or in the long term. Among the most important features of higher education institutions' internationalisation is recruitment of foreign students. A survey carried out by the European University Association (2013) among its members shows that the top priority for internationalisation is attracting students from abroad (1st choice of 30 % of all respondents), while 8 % of the participating universities replied that their aim is to attract graduate international students. One of the most widely used indicators for internationalisation is the ratio of international students versus domestic students.

The importance of attracting foreign students is reflected also in the international university rankings, which have assumed a key role in the current world education market. In the Times Higher Education's (THE) World University Rankings, the International Outlook dimension is given a weight of 7.5 % in the composite index. It includes 3 indicators each represented by 2.5 % in the total index – international-to-domestic-student ratio, international-to-domestic-staff ratio and international research collaboration. According to the ability of a university to attract undergraduates, postgraduates and faculty from all over the planet is key to its success on the world stage (THE World University Ranking, n. d.).

Knight (2007) presents rationales for internationalisation classified in four groups: social/cultural, political, economic and academic motives. As de Wit et al. (2015, p. 43) point out, from the second half of the 1990s onwards, there has been a gradual shift from political to economic rationales for internationalisation.

Hawawini (2016) classifies the merits of internationalisation that drive higher education institutions (HEIs) to internationalize into two major categories: academic motives and economic motives. According to him the academic motives include:

- *internationalizing to fulfill the institution's educational mission* (ibid., p. 18). The key question is: "Does the institution need an international dimension to accomplish its mission and fulfill its ambition?" The answer should be positive for most HEIs as even those institutions serving local markets must at least introduce an international component into their curriculum because we live in an interconnected world and students should understand this phenomenon and its far-reaching implications.
- *internationalizing to remain academically relevant in an interconnected world*. This has two dimensions (ibid., p. 21):
 - demand from students and employers for courses, programs, and research projects that deal with global issues;

- competitive pressure emanating from peer institutions that have added an international dimension to their programs.
- *internationalizing to attract the best students and faculty worldwide*. Recruitment from abroad provides the best way to overcome the shortage of qualified candidate students and staff on the local market (ibid., p. 21).

The economic motives for internationalisation could be driven by a desire to (1) grow revenues, (2) reduce operating risk via geographical diversification, and (3) receive financial support to fund activities on the home campus (ibid., p. 22).

One of the salient motives behind internationalisation efforts is profit motive as many universities see international efforts as a way to attract “revenue to balance their budgets” (Jibeen and Khan 2015, p. 197). When focusing only on the local market even institutions with high reputation may face shortages of qualified candidates. Furthermore, many public universities around the world are experiencing a drop in government support and that forces them to try to increase their recruitment of international students, sometimes at the expense of the educational quality they provide. The marketization of higher education could shift the rationale for internationalisation of public universities – from developing internationally knowledgeable graduates to increasing the sheer number of foreign students. Scott (2011) states that the main pressure to recruit international students arises from the ability to be charged higher tuition fees (tuition paid by local students is often capped by government regulation).

It is useful to see what specific benefits do universities themselves expect to gain from internationalisation. According to the IAU 4th Global Survey (Egron-Polak, E. and Hudson 2014) the most important benefit identified by HEIs was *Increased international awareness of/deeper engagement with global issues by students* (32 % of all responses), followed by *Improved quality of teaching and learning* (18 %). Thus, at least formally, universities see internationalisation as instrumental to increased quality of the educational process.

Generally, the presence and successful integration of students from various countries around the world on the campus helps honing qualities that are desirable in a global economy like international-mindedness, flexibility of thinking, tolerance and respect for others, etc. This adds significant value to the educational service and makes it more competitive especially when we compare the fulltime educational programs with the online ones. Accordingly, all universities that are willing to stay competitive on the market should try to attract foreign students and “bring the world” at the campus. Phang (2013, p. 14) finds out that international study environment is important for students in selecting their higher education abroad. The majority of the respondents in his study show appreciation for the opportunity to get to know new cultures and chances to meet classmates from different countries and experience a diverse background in an international environment.

Factors of successful internationalisation by attracting foreign students

When analysing, what determines the choice of students of a university abroad, most of the researchers find out that a major factor is the country where it is located (Kolster 2014; Mazzarol and Soutar 2002; Klemenčič 2017). Based on the differing attractiveness of countries for foreign students we distinguish between centres and peripheries. The centres tend to be located in larger and wealthier countries and benefit from the full array of resources – including funding and infrastructures such as libraries and laboratories for research, academic staff with appropriate qualifications, traditions and legislation in support of academic freedom, and an orientation toward high achievement levels on the part of individual professors and students and by the institutions themselves. Typically, these top institutions use one of the major international languages for teaching and research, and they enjoy

appropriate support from the state for their work (Altbach 2004, p. 7). Kolster (2013, p. 122) deduces the following factors - a country is attractive to international students when it:

- plays an important role in the global economy;
- has a high degree of political influence in the world;
- shows efforts to retain its economical and political importance in the world;
- uses the lingua franca of science (i.e. English);
- actively promotes its (world class) higher education system abroad;
- offers globally recognized/accepted degrees; and
- is highly recognized around the world as a bastion of world culture.

Mazzarol et al. (1997) have identified 6 “pull” factors having significant role in the choice of host country:

- the overall level of knowledge and awareness of the host country in the students' home country including the destination's reputation for quality and the recognition of its qualifications in the student's home country;
- the level of referrals or personal recommendations that the study destination receives from parents, relatives, friends;
- cost issues, including the cost of fees, living expenses, travel costs and social costs, such as crime, safety and racial discrimination;
- the environment, which relates to perceptions about the study “climate” in the destination country, as well as its physical climate and lifestyle;
- geographic proximity, which relates to the geographic (and time) proximity of the potential destination country to the student's country;
- social links, which relates to whether a student has family or friends living in the destination country and whether family and friends have studied there previously.

Other relevant contributing factors in the selection of the host country include having a positive image of the host country and a perception of superior education there, having certainty in the recognition of the foreign degree upon returning to the home country, existence of financial aid and scholarships, availability and possibility to work part-time, and the presence of a good percentage of the student's home country population in the total number of international students in the host country (Cantu 2013, p. 5).

Once the decision to study abroad in a particular host country has been made the next decision is the selection of a HEI. Mazzarol et al. (2000) have ascertained the factors that make a particular institution more attractive than its competitors. These include:

- the institution's overall reputation for quality and level of recognition within the market;
- effective use of information technology, strength of financial resources and recruitment/retention of quality/experienced staff;
- the institution's overall size, geographic location, range of courses and programs and technical superiority;
- size of the student population enrolled at the institution and the strength/activity of the Alumni;
- promotion and marketing efforts (use of private agents, advertising, offshore recruitment offices), the size of international student enrolments, and possession of international strategic alliances.

Another factor that increasingly influences the decision of students to enrol at a particular university is its performance according to the global university rankings, such as the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), the Times Higher Education (THE) and the QS world rankings. A critical factor for internationalisation of the university at home is also its ability to adopt English as the language of instruction and research.

Klemenčič (2017) ascertains that any institution that wants to be successful should put an emphasis on comprehensiveness and an integrated approach to internationalisation rather than sporadic, disjoint “pockets” of international activities across the institution. According to her that will produce a “gear effect” of connected intra-institutional international engagements boosting the internationalisation of the entire institution and thus the institutional quality enhancement and competitiveness. In the context of universities located in peripheral countries she contends that “gear effect” of integrated international engagements depends on the institutional climate and governance enabling and supporting of internationalisation and on higher education system conditions supportive to internationalisation. The latter refers to the regulatory and supportive framework stipulated by the state. The former typically requires the institution to have an internationalisation strategy with clear monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and a budget for internationalisation activities. The internationalisation policy should be supported by well-staffed international office, professional development for administrative staff (in foreign language training and international competences) and well-developed facilities and support services offered to international students.

A case-study of a large public university from a peripheral country

The University of National and World Economy (UNWE) is a public higher educational institution located in Sofia - the capital city of Bulgaria. While Bulgaria is a typical peripheral country – i.e. a country experiencing large flows of emigration, on a national level Sofia is an attractive city for the local workforce. The UNWE was founded in 1920 as Free University of Political and Economic Sciences aiming to provide professionals for the public administration and the business. That makes it the oldest specialized business and economics university in South-Eastern Europe and Bulgaria. With its almost 22 000 students it is also the biggest one.

The UNWE has an academic staff of more than 500 lecturers and provides 40 bachelor’s degree programmes and 70 master’s degree programs. It educates around 450 PhD students. Since 2007/2008 the UNWE has introduced 10 study programmes delivered entirely in English language.

The vision of UNWE is to be a leader among the HEIs in SEE that educates students and conducts research in the field of economics, management and administration, law and politics. Its mission is to support formation of highly educated persons who could lead society to a better and more humane world. Obviously in order to achieve its vision and mission the UNWE has to internationalize. The University is currently in a process of preparing its internationalisation strategy.

The environment in which the UNWE operates

According to the State Register of the Accredited Higher Schools in Bulgaria there are currently 51 accredited HEIs in the country – 37 of which are public and 14 private. The Higher Education Act (1995) stipulates the adoption of ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) by all HEIs which facilitates academic harmonization and student mobility. In order international recognition of academic and professional qualifications to be facilitated, since 2005 all graduates automatically receive the Diploma Supplement in both Bulgarian and English.

After the start of the transition to a market economy Bulgaria has undergone dramatic demographic changes that have had an immense impact on the educational sector of the country. In 1989/1990 over 103 000 high school students graduated while 18 years later their number has shrunk by more than 2 times to less than 45 000. At the same time as the national policy of funding the HEIs has followed the principle “money follow the student”, meaning that the more students get accepted the higher revenue will universities receive, has led to a significant increase in the planned intake of students. This type of marketization of higher education affects negatively the ability of public

universities to focus on educational quality and scientific excellence as they are trying to ensure that more students get enrolled and graduate.

Table 1: Dynamics of the number of high school graduates and the planned intake of students in Bulgaria for selected academic years in the period 1989–2018

<i>Indicator / Academic year</i>	<i>1989/90</i>	<i>2000/01</i>	<i>2010/11</i>	<i>2017/18</i>
Number of high school graduates	103 325	79 909	62 500	44 686
Planned intake of students	29 395	39 826	66 003	74 061
Potential number of candidate students per vacant position	3.5	2	0.9	0.5

Source: based on Borisov, B. (2018)

In 1989/1990 there were less than 30 000 places for students in all universities in Bulgaria, in 2017/2018 their number has increased by more than 2.5 times. Thus while in the beginning of the 1990s there were 3.5 potential candidate students competing for 1 vacant position nowadays there are 2 open positions for everyone that graduates from high school. This has made recruitment of foreign students imperative for most of the Bulgarian universities in order to remain on the market.

While for many of the Bulgarian universities attraction of foreign students could be considered as part of a survival strategy, the UNWE enjoys consistently high interest among local candidate students and manages to fill in all its vacant position in the conditions of the severe demographic crisis faced by Bulgaria. The motives for attracting foreign students at the UNWE could rather be connected with the ability to provide an international setting enriching the learning experience of its students and to increase the selectivity of its candidates. Due to the lower competition for entrance in the past few years candidates with very low overall performance have managed to get accepted and this later puts a drag on the quality of the teaching and learning process.

So far the high national reputation and the inflow of enough local candidates has not prompted the UNWE to look actively for foreign students. In-depth interviews with the experts from the University's International Students Sector have led to identification of the following issues regarding foreign students' recruitment:

- The procedures for enrolment of foreign students stipulated by Bulgarian legislation are quite burdensome. It takes between 3 and 7 months to get all documents recognized and visa issued for non-EU students. During the years that has frequently led to late arrival of foreign students to Bulgaria, sometimes in the midst of the semester.
- The UNWE does not allocate specific funds in its budget for internationalisation activities. It does not participate in international educational fairs on a regular basis. There is a lack of sufficient promotional brochures.
- Following a letter by the Ministry of education, youth and science from September 2012 to all HEIs with instructions on the admission of foreign citizens through the intermediation of natural or legal persons, the Rector's Council of the UNWE has decided to terminate all its contracts with recruitment agents.

Based on the above it could be stated that the UNWE basically does not pursue a consistent policy of recruitment of foreign students.

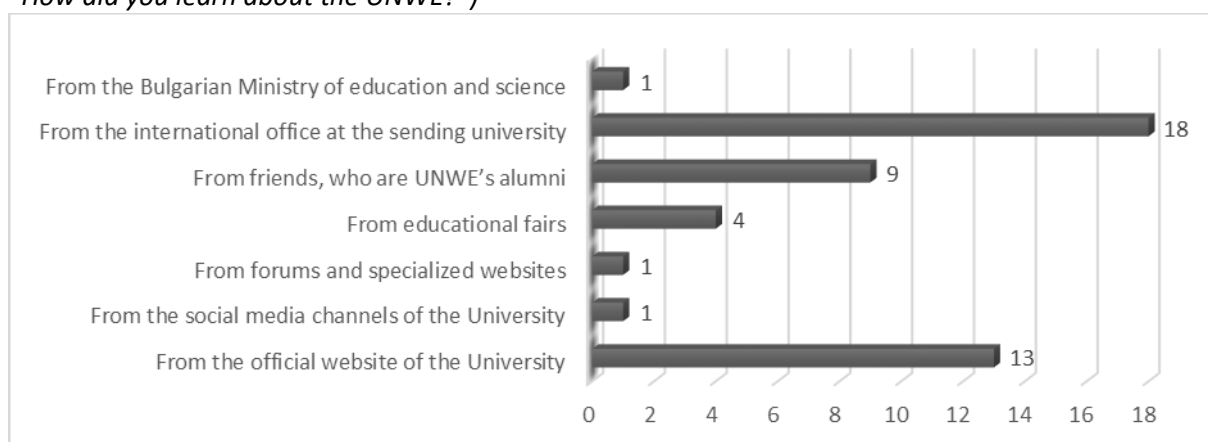
According to data provided by the UNWE's Educational Activity Directorate the total number of foreign students enrolled in full-time bachelor's programs offered by the UNWE for the period 2007 - 2016 is 481. Thus, the average number of students enrolled per academic year is a little over 48 students, which in turn represents just over 1 % of the annual intake of bachelor's degree students at the university. This share is significantly lower than the share of foreign students enrolled in HEIs in Bulgaria, which fluctuates between 2.3 % and 3.2 % (National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria, 2017) within the same period. In this respect, the UNWE falls behind other HEIs in Bulgaria and confirms the observation of Hawawini (2016, p. 9) that it is harder for well-established institutions than for new ones to internationalize when measured with inward-looking criteria (the percentage of non-national students and faculty).

A survey among foreign students at the UNWE

In order to identify the competitive strengths and weaknesses of the UNWE and based on that to explore the challenges it has to deal with in front of internationalisation we have carried out a survey among international students enrolled at the UNWE. The survey was done between 1st and 23rd December 2017 among 36 students (around three fourth of the foreign students' population in 2017/18) from different specialties, nationalities and gender that were interviewed face-to-face. The overall objective of the questionnaire is to gain insights about the motivations of foreign students' choice to study at the UNWE and their level of satisfaction with the educational process. They were asked questions about the sources of information about the UNWE they have found, the main reasons for choosing the UNWE, the educational process and the administrative service at the university, the competitive advantages and disadvantages of the UNWE, and their recommendations for improvement.

The respondents specify three main sources of information used to choose the UNWE as a host university for their study abroad shown on *Chart 1*, namely: international offices of the sending institution (50 %), official website of the university (36 %) and friends who are UNWE's alumni (25 %)³. Opinions about the information channels compared to specialties/home country/degree of education do not vary. Thus, there is still unused potential and need to explore the capacity of the other options. Special emphasis should be given to specialized educational forums, fairs and social media as part of the UNWE's strategy. It is also clear that the national Ministry of education needs to improve its activities in promoting higher education in Bulgaria in the field of Economics on the international market.

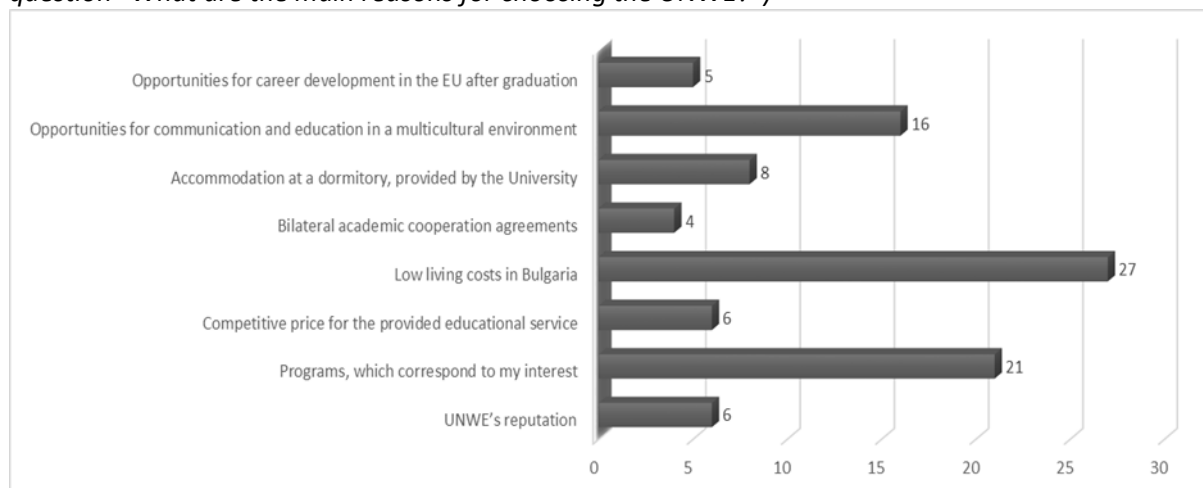
Chart 1: Sources of information of the UNWE for foreign students (number of responses to the question "How did you learn about the UNWE?")



³ Several answers were possible, therefore the total amounts to more than 100 percent.

Respondents' views about the main reasons for choosing the UNWE are mixed (*Chart 2*). Programs which correspond to the students' interest (58 %) and low living costs (75 %) are the factors that they consider as the most important. Almost half of them (44 %) say that opportunities for communication and education in a multicultural environment is one of the main reasons for their choice. Some of the respondents say that the location, employment opportunities and lower fees (compared to other EU countries) are important too.

Chart 2: Main reasons for foreign students' choice to enrol at the UNWE (number of responses to the question "What are the main reasons for choosing the UNWE?")



Further the respondents were asked to specify what are the competitive strengths of the UNWE without giving them predefined answers. The top replies reveal important information for the design of a promotion strategy. According to the majority of the answers the UNWE has competitive advantages based on:

- the variety of disciplines taught in English;
- the high level of proficiency of particular lecturers;
- the good library fund and secured electronic access;
- the friendly and relaxing environment in the campus;
- the fact that lectures and seminars are held in relatively small groups - that makes possible team work and group assignments;
- the availability and location of student hostels and canteens at acceptable prices;
- the good sports facilities;
- the good location of the university and of the city.

The most useful information was exposed when respondents answered the open question on the weaknesses of the UNWE. According to the foreign students studying at the UNWE these include:

- lack of practical site visits and practical lessons;
- low command of English of the administration (including few of the lecturers);
- slow and inefficient administration, as everything needs to be on paper;
- information published mainly in Bulgarian (poor English version of the website);
- missing online information about courses, lectures, seminars, study materials;
- lack of (quiet) places for working in groups and conducting research;
- poor (or missing) access to wireless internet in parts of the university campus;
- bad conditions in some of the dormitories.

The recommendations for improvement given by the foreign students are quite consistent with the identified weaknesses. They suggest:

- study trips for turning theory into practice, as well as assignments of real case studies;

- better communication between lecturers and students, and administration and students;
- invitation and inclusion of visiting lecturers from partner universities for certain modules/courses;
- a better-performing Alumni organization supporting students, and the university itself in the initial career orientation of graduates;
- using foreign students as ambassadors of the UNWE in their home countries;
- better organization of information for foreign students; issuance of an Orientation booklet;
- easier to navigate site with more information in English; providing online access to courses and their materials;
- relaxing the rigorous and bureaucratic procedures and regulations in place (e.g. for visa and diploma recognition);
- improvement of wireless internet access and refurbishment of the dormitories.

Discussion, conclusion and policy implications

Based on the example of the UNWE, we can infer that public universities from peripheral countries face various types of challenges to internationalisation. On the one hand these arise from the existence of explicit and implicit regulatory barriers. In the case of Bulgaria examples of such barriers represent the burdensome process of foreign diploma recognition (no option for electronic submission of documents exists but only in person) and visa approval (according to the Higher Education Act to get enrolled foreign students need to submit a valid visa, but to get visa they have to prove their status of students) and the discouragement of public universities to work with agents on commission basis.

Other impediments to internationalisation arise from the organizational inertia and the long institutional history that positions the university firmly in the domestic setting and prompts it to devote its focus on attracting local students. Another barrier represents the low administrative capacity and the motivation of the staff.

Crucial role for the internationalisation of HEIs in peripheral countries in order to overcome their inherent disadvantages is to be played on a national level. The Ministry of education, youth and science has to engage in the promotion of Bulgaria's higher education system. A large "Study in Bulgaria" campaign has to create a positive image of the country as an educational destination communicating in an effective way the advantages it possesses. Furthermore, the application procedures for foreign students should be facilitated based on a better coordination of the institutions and less documentary requirements. The focus should be on the quality of the candidates.

The internationalisation policy of the UNWE should not be of sporadic and ad hoc manner. It should be based on a comprehensive long term strategy that is supported by specially allocated funds in the annual budget of the institution. Based on a study of the potential interest in the educational offering of the UNWE a promotional campaign has to be carried out on selected target markets. An appropriate form of cooperation has to be implemented with organizations or individuals on the ground in the respective countries to advertise the UNWE and to mediate in the process of documents submission. Besides traditional communication channels like print media, word-of-mouth and public relations which are used to recruit students, the Internet and social media offer alternative channels that have to be utilized. The website of the university should be improved to provide easy-to-find, up-to-date information for the whole educational process.

Foreign students should be better integrated in the environment by providing them with possibilities to participate in various types of extracurricular activities. Also in this regard, it is important an accommodation for foreign students in dormitories with good living conditions to be provided (besides

better integration with local students having a secured accommodation is a requirement for obtaining visa).

Last but not least a structural transformation of the international relations office has to be carried out that brings increased capacity and higher motivation of its staff. It is crucial that both teaching and administrative staff are given an opportunity to improve their English language skills and international competences.

When designing its internationalisation strategy, the UNWE has to ensure inclusion of all major actors and transparency in order to obtain legitimacy of the strategy. Clear and realistic goals should be set and commitment, participation and accountability of faculty and administration put in place. Comprehensive and systematic approach should be adopted that integrates internationalisation in the strategic plan of the university. It has to be strongly acknowledged that the major rationale for internationalisation at home is to prepare graduates who are more internationally knowledgeable and adaptable to work in more culturally diverse communities and not just to increase the revenue received from foreign students. The internationalisation is not an end in itself, it is a tool to achieve the university's mission and contribute to national development.

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INTERCULTURAL DIMENSION IN TEACHER TRAINING – SOME EXAMPLES FROM BULGARIAN UNIVERSITY PRACTICE

Medkulturna razsežnost pri usposabljanju učiteljev – primeri iz prakse bolgarskih univerz

Siyka Georgieva Chavdarova – Kostova¹

Abstract

The intercultural dimension in teacher training is determined by the specifics of the multicultural school environment, legal regulations, institutional university policy, personal activity of individual teachers. The experience of the Faculty of Education, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in the last 15 years in integrating the intercultural dimension into disciplines at Bachelor and Master degrees is presented. The content of the disciplines (Intercultural education, Equal access to education – management aspects, European intercultural dialogue by education, Preventive and corrective activity in multiethnic environment, Inclusive education) takes into account the specifics of the particular Master programs or Bachelor degree programs. There is a dynamics in their development according to current needs of the school multicultural practice and the state regulation regarding teacher training.

Keywords: intercultural dimension, teacher training, Bulgarian university practice

Povzetek

Medkulturno razsežnost v izobraževanju učiteljev določajo posebnosti multikulturnega šolskega okolja, pravni predpisi, institucionalna univerzitetna politika, osebna dejavnost posameznih učiteljev. Predstavljene so izkušnje Pedagoške fakultete s Sofijske univerze »St. Kliment Ohridski« v zadnjih 15 letih pri vključevanju medkulturne razsežnosti v discipline Bachelor in Master diploma. Vsebina disciplin (Medkulturna vzgoja, Enak dostop do izobraževanja – vidiki upravljanja, Evropski medkulturni dialog pri izobraževanju, Preventivna in korektivna dejavnost v multietničnem okolju, Inkluzivno izobraževanje) upošteva posebnosti posameznih magistrskih ali visokošolskih programov. V njihovem razvoju je dinamika glede na trenutne potrebe šolske multikulturne prakse in državno ureditev v zvezi z usposabljanjem učiteljev.

Ključne besede: medkulturna razsežnost, usposabljanje učiteljev, bolgarska univerzitetna praksa

Bulgaria as a multicultural society

Multiculturality is a traditional characteristic of Bulgaria. For hundreds of years, Bulgarian, Turks, Armenian, Jews, Vlachs, Tatars, Greeks, Karakachans, Roma, Arumuns etc. have lived together sharing their weekdays and holidays. The land of Bulgaria covers the region, which is the crossroad between two global religions – Christianity and Islam, since 14th century (Dialogue of the cultures in Bulgaria, 2008).

Nowadays, the population includes a variety of ethnic groups, religious communities and mother tongues. Some are traditional – they have been living on the territory of the country for centuries. Others are recent immigrants, including refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Iran, Nigeria, Somalia and other countries.

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According to the last Population census (2011), the Bulgarian ethnic group is the largest – approx. 84 %. The biggest ethnic minority is Turkish – approx. 10 %. Roma people are approx. 5 % (but non-official data shows that they are more than 10 %–15 % because differences in their identification). Armenian, Jews, Karakachans etc. are not so many, but they are important part of Bulgarian ethno-cultural mosaic.

There are some significant differences regarding social and educational integration of people from traditional minorities in Bulgaria. Some of the ethnic groups are very well integrated – Armenians, Jews, Karakachans etc. They speak very well the official Bulgarian language, they graduate secondary and many of them – higher education, they realize well on the labour market and there are more positive attitudes toward them (Pamporov 2009). They respect their mother languages, culture, traditions, history, names and they are engaged with preservation of their culture in different forms (Nalbantyan-Hacheryan 2008).

The biggest problems are with the social and educational integration of Roma people. Despite the guaranteed right to education and equal access to the education system there is still a problem in Bulgaria with the motivation of part of Roma parents to ensure the necessary presence of their children in school. This affects the perspectives for children`s educational development and their further social realization, incl. on the labour market. But this is not a compact homogeneous group. They could:

- be Christians (Orthodox or Protestants) or Muslims (traditional or non-traditional Islam);
- speak different Roma dialects as Mother tongue;
- speak Bulgarian or Turkish language as Mother tongue (and could identify as Bulgarians or Turkish people);
- live in small villages or in big town districts (some thousand Roma people in each), in legal or illegal houses and shelters (*Roma in Bulgaria* 2008).

Not all, but one part of them that is in the group of the most vulnerable – very poor, living in bad conditions, not educated, with no or little motivation to go to school (mainly external motivation, related to social aids for children), reproducing some cultural models that contradict to legal understanding of the children`s rights – early marriages, early pregnancies, early school dropping out etc. All this is a prerequisite for low chances on the labour market, high rate of unemployment, high dependence from social services, deviant and delinquent behavior². The way of life of such Roma people provokes negative stereotypes and attitudes to Roma people as a whole. This situation has its direct reflections on the effectiveness of the process of school integration of Roma children.

Last 15 years Bulgaria undertook many measures and different kind of official documents – strategies, programs, directed to optimization of the process of the integration were developed. The main accent was put on the Roma integration.

Priorities in the work with Roma people (*National strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for Roma Integration 2011–2020*):

- Education – inclusion and retention of the Roma children in the educational system and ensuring quality education in multicultural settings.
- Protection of health – equality in the access to quality health services and preventive programs.
- Living conditions – improving the living conditions, including technical infrastructure.

² National strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for Roma Integration (2011–2020); Framework program for Roma integration in Bulgarian society (2010–2020); Prevention of Early Marriages.

- Employment – improving the access to the labour market and increasing of the number of working Roma people.
- Supremacy of the law and antidiscrimination – guarantee of the citizen`s rights with accent on the women and the children, protection of the public order, opposition to manifestations of intolerance and “language of hatred”.
- Culture and media – creating conditions to equal access of the Roma community to the cultural life in society, conservation and development of the Roma traditional culture and creation”.

Special accent was put on the integration by education. Main document of the educational policy in Bulgaria that reflects official position to the intercultural interrelations at school settings and the specific of works with children from traditional minorities is the Strategy for educational integration of children and pupils from ethnic minorities (2015–2020). This Strategy follows the first Strategy for educational integration of children and pupils from ethnic minorities (2004) and its actualization (2010) that is seen as “first sector document with contribution to the development of the Bulgarian education in the context of the educational integration of children and pupils from ethnic minorities”. There are 4 strategic goals in the last Strategy (2015–2020):

1. Full socialization of children and pupils from ethnic minorities.
2. Guarantee equal access to quality education for children and pupils from ethnic minorities.
3. Confirmation of the intercultural education as unabolished part of the process of modernization of the Bulgarian educational system.
4. Keeping and developing the cultural identity of the children and pupils from ethnic minorities.

The specificity of the Bulgarian multicultural situation and the accents in the state strategic and normative documents related to the education of the minority children are the main determinants of the university teacher training. The main aim of this article is to present namely intercultural dimension in teacher training in Bulgarian university practice.

Intercultural dimension in teacher training at the Faculty of Education, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Bulgaria

In the last 15 years many in-service trainings were realized with teachers in different regions of Bulgaria, mainly with big proportion of Roma or Turkish children. This was part of the Ministry of Education and Science policy to raise teacher qualification and to help teachers to cope with different kind of difficulties in their work. Also many projects were realized from NGOs in this field. The Ministry of education and science has special structural unit – Center for educational integration of children and pupils from ethnic minorities, that works on the base of projects realized from schools. Serious support in this direction are many program schemes managed by the Ministry of Education and Science again on the project base. Ministry of Education and Science made visible some good school practices in the educational integration on its website (*Good practices for educational integration*).

In this paper main accent is put on the university teacher training on intercultural issues. The quality of teaching and learning in multicultural schools depends on the respective qualitative teacher training in the higher education institutions – pre-service and in-service (Chavdarova – Kostova 2010). Contemporary teachers need to be prepared to work with children with different ethnic, religious, national identity – from traditional and non-traditional minorities (migrants, refugees). Intercultural dimension in teacher training is the necessary condition for the development of intercultural competence in the school space.

This is the main purpose of a more that 15-years good practice in the Faculty of education, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” in the development of the intercultural dimension in teacher training on the base of some elective subjects for Bachelor degree students (Bachelor programs Pedagogy, Non-formal education and Social work) and Master degree students (Master programs Educational

management, Pedagogy of deviant behaviour, Social work with children and family, Clinical social work). Subjects are - Intercultural education, Equal access to education – management aspects, Inclusive education, European intercultural dialogue by education, Preventive and corrective activity in multicultural environment, Social work with refugees. The content of all these subjects is based on ideas as valuing diversity and heterogeneity, promoting intercultural understanding, intercultural competences development.

There are hundred of students that have finished successfully all these elective courses as a result of this work. More than 15 diploma thesis on different topics of the intercultural education were developed from Bachelor degree students and more than 25 diploma thesis from Master degree students, there are 3 PhD successfully finished dissertations also.

For many of them such courses provoked their attitudes to the diversity as a concept and as a practice – school and social. Bulgaria historically is a multicultural society but this fact is not enough to develop intercultural competences. It`s necessary to work for their development especially when the social experience in multicultural communication is missed. At the beginning of their study many of our university students have not knowledge about specifics of the main ethnic groups in our country, other religious practices, immigrants and refugees. Many of them have not rich experience in communication with representatives of different cultural groups because their personal living in predominantly monocultural settings. Because of that such university subjects are very important for their personal development especially for their attitudes to diversity.

One of the main aims of the subjects is to develop understanding on the base of the knowledge – necessary condition for the tolerance. It`s not an easy work. Based on the personal experience, historic events and media influences students could have a mixture of positive and not so positive attitudes to different cultural groups. Sometimes it`s very difficult to cope with such mixture of attitudes and emotions in the auditorium – results from previous family and social influences. But the final results are hopeful (ibid.).

External and internal determinants of intercultural dimension involvement in teacher training

Two main determinants of intercultural dimension involvement in teacher training can be identified - external and internal.

External determinants: in general, the specificity of the socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural context in which the education in the respective country is realized undoubtedly determines the content of the preparation of the future pedagogical staff, in particular in the field of intercultural issues.

It is very important to take into account the specific characteristics of the overall social space in which the education on its different levels in the particular country are realized. The higher education system must be adequate to public expectations and needs, and to prepare staff to succeed not just to pursue professionally but also to contribute to the development of the society in which students grew up and live.

This is true in terms of the readiness and real possibilities of the higher education to prepare specialists for pedagogical work with children in the context of intercultural interactions and peaceful co-existence between the "carriers" of different types of differences in the particular national environment.

State policy in the field of intercultural issues also determines externally the university education in the context of the intercultural education. The review of the accents reflected in different legal acts allows to outline the respective possibilities and limitations regarding the inclusion of the problems of intercultural education in university pedagogical training at Bachelor, Master and PhD degrees.

There are a variety of normative documents at national level in Bulgaria regulating the place of intercultural issues in the public life.³ Within these documents attention is also paid to the problem of ensuring the education system by competent specialists in the field of the intercultural issues, including the problem of teacher training in this field. These normative documents highlight a number of dimensions of diversity - ethnic, religious, linguistic, special educational needs, immigrants, incl. refugees, to whom the principle of equality must be implemented and presuppose non-discriminatory treatment.

The careful consideration of the normative basis allows to draw some basic conclusions: at the level of state policy it is obvious the placement of accents on the preservation of the linguistic, ethnic and religious identity (*Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* 1999). These opportunities become "intercultural" when activities for identity preservation are promoted among children with other identities and when interaction between different identities becomes possible. This function is already in the capacity of pedagogical subjects that organize different educational activities - school and out-of-school.

Such fact translates to the other main focus - the issue of integration, concerning both children with different linguistic, ethnic, religious identities, as well as children with different national identities (migrants, refugees), children with special educational needs. It is not accidental in the equivalence of the terminology used in all these cases, also - similar tendencies in the development of the terminology apparatus both at the scientific and the educational-political documents level. This fact can be considered as favorable as regards the inclusion of this issue in the preparation of future teachers because it would allow a comprehensive overview of the problem and would facilitate the understanding of the determinations and practical realization of the integration processes (and this is particularly valuable in view of the limited time that students could get acquainted with the problem). Existing state-level policy on teacher training (pre-service training in particular) is a significant external determinant of university education in the context of the intercultural education. In Bulgaria, the policy regarding teacher training for the school education is fixed at the state level (*Ordinance on the state requirement for the acquisition of professional qualification "teacher"* 2016). There is no possibility to define some compulsory subjects directly oriented to the intercultural issues on the base of the Ordinance on the state requirement for the acquisition of professional qualification "teacher". The only possibility is to put some accents in the frame of the compulsory subject Inclusive education /minimum 15 hours as a whole/. Other possibilities are related to elective subjects in the teacher training curriculum.

The internal determinants of university education in the context of intercultural education are related to the inter-institutional commitment of the particular higher education institution which prepares pedagogical staff, to include topics and disciplines in the context of intercultural dimension in education.

Characteristic of higher education institutions in Bulgaria is the observance of the principle of academic autonomy, fixed in the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Higher Education Act. The normative base emphasizes the role of the department and faculty for initiating and fixing in relevant

³Framework program for Roma integration in Bulgarian society (2010–2020); Ordinance for Inclusive education 2017; Strategy for educational integration of children and pupils from ethnic minorities (2015–2020); Ordinance on the state requirement for the acquisition of professional qualification "teacher" 2016.

curriculum more directly or indirectly addressing intercultural issues. Although a discipline is offered by a relevant lecturer, it is fixed in the curriculum as a result of a decision of the Faculty Council - it is also a "commitment" of the faculty, which already has its "contribution" in the promotion of the problem and the preparation of students on such topic.

In practice, the opportunity students to get information about basic aspects of the intercultural dimensions in education could be realized when the lecturer himself decides to include such issues in the pedagogical curriculum – in compulsory or elective subjects.

There is a varied practice in Bulgaria in terms of integration in the teacher training of learning content related to particular types of socio-cultural diversity - for students who are preparing in Bachelor or Master degree, or in the educational-scientific degree "Doctor". In most cases, inclusion of this type of content into the training of future teachers took place after 2000.

The content of each elective subject in the curriculum of teacher training in the Faculty of Education, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in the area of the intercultural dimension in education reflects some specifics of the university degree or program.

The subject *Intercultural education* has more than 15-years of experience in the Bachelor degree (Bachelor programs Pedagogy and Social work) and in the Master degree program Educational management. Main topic in the content of this subjects are: Philosophical "roots" of the idea for interculturality, Determinants of the intercultural education, The attitude toward diversity, Cultural interactions, Legal bases of the intercultural education, Social integration of people with differences, Intercultural pedagogy as an idea, The process of intercultural education within the school institution, Religious diversity, ethnic diversity, language diversity in the context of the intercultural education, Intercultural education – limitations, Intercultural competence, Patriotic education in the context of the intercultural education, Teacher training and qualification in the field of the intercultural education.

This was the first attempt to include intercultural dimension in the teacher training of future teachers. After, several other subjects were developed to meet additional interest of students in this field. For example, in the master program Educational management many students decided to learn additionally subjects as Culture and education – management aspects, Equal access to education – management aspects or Inclusive education. Some students decided to study three of these subjects. This is an indicator of achieved goals in terms of increasing interest in intercultural issues and the readiness to work effectively in a multicultural school environment.

The subject *Equal access to education - management aspects* was developed to clarify specifics of legal bases and practical realization of this very important not only for Bulgaria aspect of the intercultural education. Because of that main topic of the content of this subjects are: The idea of equal access to education - history and content. Relationship between the concepts equal access - equal start - equal chance in education, Main international and state documents presupposing the realization of the idea of equal access to education, Bulgarian state institutions, ensuring the realization of the idea of equal access to education - Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, other ministries and agencies, The specificity of realizing the idea of equal access to education in different educational degrees – pre-school education, secondary education, higher education, Non-governmental organizations committed to implement the idea of equal access to education, Supporting functions of the religious institutions for the realization of the idea of equal access to education, The school principal as the responsible implementer of the idea of equal access to education, Public attitudes to the idea of equal access to education, The teacher as a factor in realizing the idea of equal access to education.

Faculty of education has 10-years of experience in the special preparation of professionals in the area of the non-formal education – Bachelor program Non-formal education, Bachelor degree. For these students a special elective subject was developed - *European intercultural dialogue by education* with main topics: The notion of diversity - at the center of the idea of intercultural dialogue and intercultural education, Intercultural dialogue - a priority in European education policy, International organizations and communities realizing the idea of intercultural dialogue, Normative documents for realization of intercultural education and intercultural dialogue at European level, Intercultural dialogue and human rights, Ethno-cultural dimension and religious dimension of the intercultural dialogue and intercultural education, Education for democratic citizenship - Intercultural dialogue - Intercultural education, Intercultural competence.

There is a special interest to the subjects Intercultural education and European intercultural dialogue through education from many Erasmus and other foreign students from different countries that have been in the Faculty of education in the last 5-6 years – students from Spain, Belgium, France, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Japan. This fact could be interpreted in the context of the internationalisation in the higher education institutions as an answer of needs of foreign students to develop themselves in intercultural topics area.

New intercultural topics in the university teacher training

Two very new opportunities for inclusion of intercultural topics in the university teacher training will be presented at the end of this paper. The first one meets specific needs in the training of professionals in the Master program Pedagogy of deviant behaviour - Preventive and corrective activity in multicultural environment. The second one – Inclusive education was initially developed as an elective subject and now it is a compulsory subject in teacher training according to the *Ordinance on the state requirement for the acquisition of professional qualification “teacher”* (2016). Among the main topics within the content of the subjects *Preventive and corrective activity in multi-ethnic environment* are: The notion of ethnicity - concepts, approaches, definitions, essence, content, key features, Ethnicity and socio-cultural identity - ethnicity and nationality, religiosity, mother tongue, socio-economic status, race, Multi-ethnic environment: concepts, approaches, definitions, essence, content, key features, Ethnicity and multi-ethnicity in strategic and normative documents at European and national level, Attitudes towards ethnic diversity in European and non-European education systems, Subjects and specifics of preventive and corrective activity in a multi-ethnic educational environment. Main topics of the subject Inclusive education are: The idea of inclusion in education, Global and European policy on inclusion in education, Inclusive education in Bulgarian context, "Different" children as objects/subjects of inclusion in education - children with SEN and children with socio-cultural differences as the main "target" groups - typology and characteristics, Methodological specifics of the inclusion process in the school educational environment, Non-governmental organizations focusing on inclusive education, Teacher as realizing the idea of inclusive education: planning, organizing lessons in an inclusive learning environment, Parents and inclusive education, the interaction teachers – parents, Inclusive education in a community context: models, approaches, practices.

Conclusion

The inclusion of the intercultural dimension of education in teacher training requires consideration of the needs of practice at national and international level. The preparation of teachers at a concrete university implies increasing their readiness to work in a multicultural environment characterized by some respective specificities. The presented experience of teacher training at the Faculty of Education, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” reflects namely such type of needs of the Bulgarian multicultural environment in the context of the European and world tendencies. Even in just 15 years, the dynamics in the development of the curriculum in a particular faculty shows the need permanently to take into

account the dynamics of the needs in the practical reality. The effectiveness of the university teacher training depends on it.

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MEDNARODNA TERENSKA IZVEDBA PREDMETA KOT KAKOVOSTNI PRISPEVEK K POUČEVANJU KARTOGRAFIJE

International joint field course as a quality improvement in curriculum in cartography

Dušan Petrovič¹, Karel Kriz² in Klemen Kozmus Trajkovski³

Povzetek

19 študentov iz štirih držav, študentov magistrskih študijskih programov na Univerzi v Ljubljani in Univerzi na Dunaju, je skupaj s štirimi pedagogi obeh univerz maja 2017 v planinskem okolju na Veliki planini izvedlo štiridnevno terensko izvedbo predmeta, s poudarki na področjih topografske kartografije, terenskega kartiranja, terenske pridobitve podatkov, izdelave in uporabe kart. Celotna izvedba predmeta se je začela z uvodno predstavitvijo, oblikovanjem šestih mednarodno mešanih skupin, pridobitvijo razpoložljivih podatkov in pripravo osnovne karte. Osrednji del predmeta je bil izveden na terenu, kjer so ob intenzivnem sodelovanju članov skupine izdelale združeno topografsko karto šestih posameznih delov, pripravile vsakodnevni video blog, končno predstavitev dela in končno spletno stran. Mednarodna projektna terenska izvedba predmeta se je izkazala kot dober primer izboljšave načina poučevanja kartografije in mednarodnega povezovanja študentov, kar so potrdili končni rezultati študentov ter njihova mnenja in komentarji izvedbe. Študentje so poudarili prepoznane podobnosti v predznanju in postavljenih študijskih ciljih ter dejstvo, kako so brez težav vzpostavili vsakodnevno in strokovno komunikacijo v tujem jeziku. S tem so pridobili na samozavesti prihodnjega kariernega razvoja v širšem mednarodnem okolju.

Ključne besede: kartografija, terenska izvedba, mednarodno sodelovanje, medkulturna komunikacija, posodobitev kurikulumu

Abstract

19 students from 4 different countries, coming from two master study programmes at University of Ljubljana and University of Vienna together with four teachers from both institutions, experienced the joint 4-days field excursion, focused on topographic cartography, field mapping, data capturing, map production and map use in mountainous environment of Velika planina, Slovenia, in May 2017. The whole procedure started with initial instructions for students, creating 6 internationally mixed groups, data collecting and preparing separate base maps. The main part was at the field with intense cooperation within the groups, which resulted in a collage topographic map merged from 6 map parts of each group, presentations, video blogs and final web page. Field course with project work demonstrated the example of improvement in study curriculum and international cooperation, recognised from final students' results and especially final students' comments. The students emphasized the recognized similarities in the knowledge and the study goals, as well as the fact that they easily established daily and professional communication in a foreign language. With this they gained the confidence of future career development in a wider international environment.

Keywords: cartography, field course, internationalisation, intercultural communication, curriculum improvement

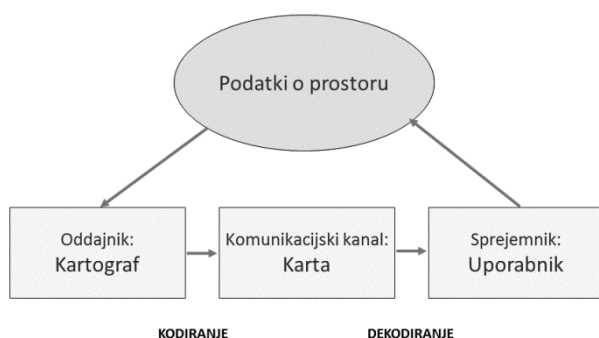
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Uvod

Kartografija je znanost, tehnologija in umetnost o izdelavi in uporabi kart (ICA – International Cartographic Association). Njena glavna naloga je posredovanje prostorskih podatkov uporabniku, ki na osnovi teh podatkov sprejema odločitve. To lahko doseže z učinkovito komunikacijo med kartografom kot posredovalcem in uporabnikom kot prejemnikom podatkov (*Slika 1*). Karta v kakršnikoli obliki predstavlja medij komunikacijskega prenosa, medsebojna usklajenost med posredovalcem in prejemnikom pa je ključna za uspešnost podatkovnega prenosa (Fridl in Petrovič 2017, str. 2).



Slika 1: Kartografski komunikacijski proces

Komunikacija pa ni le neobhodni del kartografske teorije, pač pa tudi sestavni del poučevanja in medsebojnega sodelovanja tako učiteljev kot študentov. Vsa ta bistvena dejstva so vsebovana v učnih ciljih akademskih predmetov s področja kartografije in pričakovanih usposobljenostih študentov, ki opravijo te predmete v sklopu različnih študijskih programov na različnih fakultetah, tudi v različnih državah (Fakulteta za gradbeništvo in geodezijo UL). Se pa med programi, predmeti in seveda tudi izvajalci razlikujejo metode dela in načini poučevanja za dosego učnih izidov.

Visokošolske institucije so odgovorne za pripravo vseh diplomantov za življenje in delo v globalni družbi, ki je v sodobnem svetu tako na lokalni kot tudi globalni ravni vse bolj povezana (Aškerc Veniger 2017, str. 16). To je mogoče doseči s poglobljenim mednarodnim in medkulturnim sodelovanjem in povezovanjem med študenti, programi, fakultetami in univerzami, kar so ključni cilji Strategije internacionalizacije slovenskega visokega šolstva 2016–2020 (Aškerc Veniger in Flander 2016). Takšno sodelovanje pa poleg omenjene priprave diplomantov na izzive globalnega sveta prispeva tudi k internacionalizaciji kurikulumov, torej celotnega sistema načrtovanja in utemeljevanja povezanosti učnih ciljev oziroma izidov z metodami in pristopi dela (Cvetek 2015). Oblike vključevanja mednarodnih in medkulturnih elementov v kurikulum in s tem v njegovo posodobitev se zelo razlikujejo med posameznimi strokami (Aškerc Veniger 2017, str. 16), zato je dobre izkušnje smiselno iskati v sorodnih in primerljivih strokah. Na področju s prostorom povezanih tehničnih znanosti, kamor vsekakor uvrščamo kartografijo, nam primer dobre izkušnje naprednega pristopa mednarodnega povezovanja predstavlja projektno učenje, ki se odvija izven fakultete, na konkretnem obravnavanem območju (Zavodnik Lamovšek idr. 2016).

V sledenju navedenim ciljem in iskanju izboljšav kurikulumoma smo se na osnovi predhodnega raziskovalnega sodelovanja med pedagogi dogovorili za podpis na Erasmus+ temelječega podrobnejšega sporazuma med Fakulteto za gradbeništvo in geodezijo Univerze v Ljubljani (UL) ter

Oddelkom za geografijo in regionalne raziskave Univerze na Dunaju (University of Vienna, Department of Geography and Regional Research – UW) o skupni izvedbi predmeta s področja kartografije in s tem nadgradnji pedagoškega dela.

Skupno raziskovalno področje obeh partnerjev je planinska kartografija. Ta ima nekatere posebnosti, kot npr. zahtevno pridobivanje podatkov o stanju prostora, tudi zaradi zahtevnosti dostopa, ustrezno prepoznavanje morfoloških oblik v naravi in njihovo upodabljanje na kartah, uporaba kart v zahtevnih vremenskih razmerah in pogojih gibanja (Commission on Mountain Cartography). Pridobitev tovrstnih izkušenj je tudi za študente najustreznejša v obliki projektnega učenja v čim realnejših pogojih, zato smo v okviru skupne izvedbe predmeta predvideli terensko izvedbo v planinskem okolju. Seveda tovrstna izvedba predstavlja tudi določene omejitve, tako glede števila udeleženih študentov kot dodatnih stroškov izvedbe, ki jih v celoti ni mogoče kriti iz izvedbe študijskih programov. Tako smo presodili, da je najustreznejše združiti izvedbo dveh izbirnih predmetov magistrskih študijskih programov – Geodezija in geoinformatika na UL ter Geografija na UW. Oba predmeta v svojem opisu predvidevata projekten način dela, kar je omogočalo določeno prilagodljivost. Izvedba združenega predmeta je smiselna v angleškem jeziku; v skladu s slovensko zakonodajo in pravili UL je takšna izvedba mogoča pri izbirnih predmetih. Z vsemi omenjenimi dejstvi so bili študentje seznanjeni pred vpisom izbirnih predmetov.

Predstavitev primera

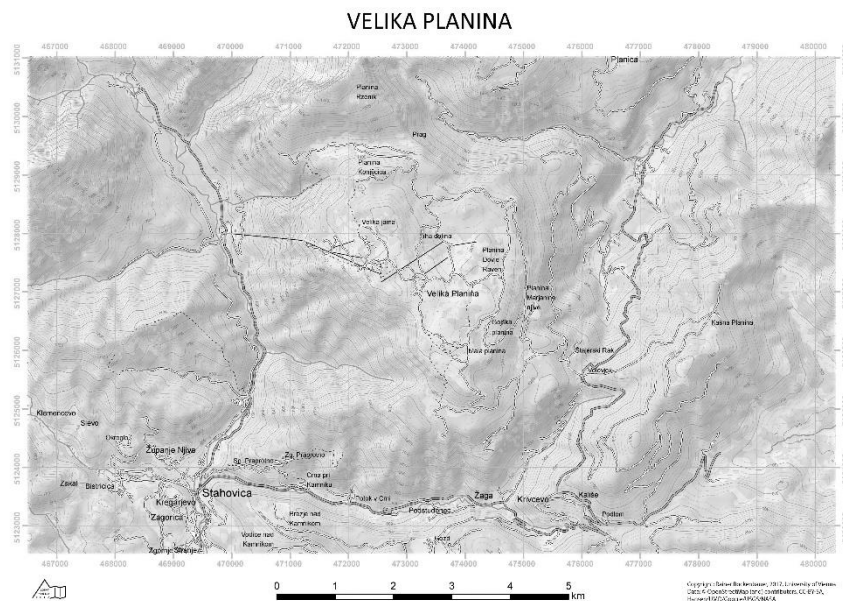
Priprave na izvedbo predmeta

Cilje in vsebine združene izvedbe predmeta smo oblikovali v skladu s predpisanimi cilji in vsebinami ter obsegom obeh vključenih izbirnih predmetov ter dodatnimi možnostmi, ki jih je glede na temeljna izhodišča izvedbe kurikulov v mednarodnem okolju omogočala mednarodna terenska izvedba predmeta kot projektnega učenja. Cilji oziroma učni izidi so bili tako:

- izdelava kakovostne topografske karte gorske pokrajine na osnovi prosto dostopnih podatkov z uporabo odprtokodnih računalniških programov (QGIS, Inkscape, GIMP idr.),
- pregled terena, dodaten terenski zajem podatkov z uporabo komercialno dostopnih naprav (pametni telefoni, GNSS zapisovalci ipd.),
- uporaba in primerjava kartografskih znakov različnih držav za prikaz vsebine karte, s poudarkom na metodah in načinih prikazovanja reliefnih oblik,
- preizkus uporabe karte z orientacijo v zahtevnih terenskih razmerah,
- dokumentiranje opravljenega dela, priprava poročil in objavljanje na spletu,
- spodbujanje mednarodnega sodelovanja študentov ter pedagogov in medkulturnega komuniciranja,
- seznanitev s teoretičnimi osnovami in praktično uporabo naprednih tehnologij (GNSS meritve, uporaba daljinsko vodenih zrakoplovnih snemalnih sistemov, lasersko skeniranje) ter
- kritična presoja in analiza izdelanih kart, njihova primerjava.

K predmetu se je prijavilo 19 študentov, število 20 smo postavili kot zgornjo mejo izvedljivosti. Z UL se je k predmetu prijavilo 13 študentov, izmed njih eden s Poljske, na UL v okviru študentske izmenjave v programu Erasmus+. Na UW se je k predmetu prijavilo 6 študentov, med njimi tudi študent, ki prihaja iz Srbije. Uvodni del izvedbe predmeta je potekal ločeno na obeh sodelujočih inštitucijah. Študente smo seznanili s cilji, zahtevami in načinom izvedbe predmeta ter območjem, za katerega izdelujemo topografske karte. Pozvali smo jih, da oblikujejo 6 mednarodno mešanih skupin, v vsaki sta po dva študenta UL in po eden iz UW, dodatno je pri eni skupini še poljski študent na izmenjavi. Vsaka skupina je nato morala pridobiti razpoložljive in dostopne kartografske vire, izbrati svojo knjižnico kartografskih znakov, ki jo bodo uporabili pri izdelavi topografske karte, ter se dogovoriti za uporabo programske opreme, s katero bodo karto izdelali. Med razpoložljivimi knjižnicami kartografskih znakov smo jim tudi

zaradi dostopnosti v razumljivem jeziku predlagali naslednje: državne topografske karte Avstrije, Slovenije, Poljske, Združenega kraljestva, Kanade ter planinske karte Planinskega kluba Avstrije. Podatke o območju so pridobili iz globalnih prosto dostopnih podatkovnih baz, npr. OpenStreetMap ali iz uradnih prostorskih podatkov za Slovenijo. Skupine so na osnovi pridobljenih podatkov tako že vnaprej pripravile osnutke topografske karte območja v izbrani knjižnici kartografskih znakov (*Slika 2*). Vloga pedagogov je bila v tej fazi predvsem v svetovanju pri morebitnih zapletih.



Slika 2: Osnutek topografske karte območja z uporabo kartografskih znakov državne topografske karte Kanade

Terenska izvedba predmeta

Osrednji del združene izvedbe predmetov je predstavljalo štiridnevno projektno usmerjeno terensko delo na Veliki planini v drugi polovici maja 2017. Bivali smo v planinski postojanki, kjer smo imeli poleg nastanitve in oskrbe na voljo tudi ločen prostor za delo in brezžično internetno povezavo. Uvodni dan je bil namenjen seznanitvi z območjem z ogledom in obhodom, geografskimi posebnostmi delovnega območja ter razdelitvijo območja planote v delovišča šestih skupin. Poleg značilnih pastirskih koč smo jih posebej opozorili na prikaz izrazitih reliefnih oblik (brezna, vrtače, skalne strukture) in ovir, ki omejujejo gibanje. Naslednja dva dneva so skupine na terenu preverjale pravilnost in dopolnjevale vsebino predhodno pripravljene topografske karte za svoje delovno območje (*Slika 3*).



Slika 3: Delo skupine na terenu

ob koncu terenske izvedbe, pa tudi ob naslednjih skupnih srečanjih. Študenti UL so svoje mnenje podali tudi preko rednih študentskih anket o izvedbi predmeta. V odzivih med pozitivnimi izkušnjami prevladuje navdušenje nad terenskim delom v atraktivnem visokogorskem okolju, doseženimi rezultati konkretne projektne naloge (izdelano karto v tako kratkem času), praktično izkušnjo uporabe karte pri orientacijskem teku, sprotno analizo opravljenega dela ter hitro vzpostavljeno povezanost in sodelovanje članov tako znotraj skupin kot med skupinami. Zanimivo, da jih je precej izpostavilo vnaprejšnje nelagodje v pričakovanju komunikacije in posredovanja rezultatov v tujem jeziku, nato pa ugotovitev, da prav s tem niso imeli nobenih težav. Kot manj ustrezno pa so izpostavili naporen ritem in malo časa za kakovostno izdelavo končne karte. V anketi je vseh 6 sodelujočih slovenskih študentov z najvišjo oceno ovrednotilo skupno zadovoljstvo s predmetom ter vzpodbujanje študentov k samostojnemu delu. Tudi celoten obseg opravljenega dela pri predmetu so ocenili kot povsem primerno predvidenemu obsegu v kurikulumu. Na osnovi zbranih in ovrednotenih odzivov zaključujemo, da smo tako študenti kot pedagogi obeh vključenih inštitucij, UL in UW, prepoznali mnoge prednosti tovrstnega organiziranja študijskega procesa pri predmetu s področja kartografije. Vsi glavni učni cilji izvedbe predmeta kartografije – izdelava karte zahtevnega gorskega območja s terensko dopolnitvijo, uporaba odprtokodnih programskih orodij in javno dostopnih kartografskih virov, upoštevanje kartografskih načel oblikovanja karte ob uporabi izbranega kartografskega ključa – so bili doseženi. Prav tako so bili izpolnjeni širši cilji: krepitev raziskovalnega in pedagoškega sodelovanja obeh inštitucij z nadaljnjim razvojem učnih načrtov področja kartografije in vzpodbujanje mednarodnega ter medkulturnega sodelovanja študentov.

Pri tem se moramo zavedati tudi omejitev tovrstne izvedbe, med katerimi so dodatni stroški za študente zaradi namestitve in potovanja izven kraja študija in omejitev števila udeležencev, ki še omogoča učinkovito projektno delo znotraj skupine ter podporo vsaki skupini s strani pedagogov. Izvedbo je tudi težko umestiti v siceršnji urnik rednih pedagoških obremenitev pedagogov in študentov. Za celovitejšo analizo in bolj verodostojno vrednotenje bi potrebovali primerjanje dosežkov in vtisov z drugačno obliko izvedbe predmetov ali spremljanje tovrstne izvedbe skozi daljše časovno obdobje. Glede na večinske pozitivne izkušnje načrtujemo, da se bo ta možnost ponudila, saj pripravljamo ponovno združeno izvedbo predmeta v letu 2019, na drugem območju in z morebitno vključitvijo študentov še katere inštitucije iz morda še dodatne države. V vsakem primeru pa s tovrstno obliko izvedbe predmeta omogočamo večjemu številu študentov mednarodno izkušnjo v skladu z načeli domače internacionalizacije – ang. *internationalisation at home* (Beelen in Jones 2015).

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INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY – OPPORTUNITY FOR COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH AND STUDENT CENTRED PROJECT-ORIENTED LEARNING AND TRAINING: A CASE OF LABORATORY FOR FOOD MICROBIOLOGY

Mednarodna mobilnost – priložnost za skupno raziskovanje ter na študenta osredotočeno projektno učenje in usposabljanje: primer Laboratorija za živilsko mikrobiologijo

Meta Sterniša¹ and Sonja Smole Možina²

Abstract

Mobility is one of the key strategies for implementation of the internationalisation in higher education, combining 'at home' and 'cross-border' internationalisation. The research group of the authors has a long-lasting international cooperation in educational and research work with several institutions abroad, based especially on the mobility provided through bilateral research projects, university networks and other networks enabling short-term exchanges. The purpose of this paper is to present a case of Laboratory for Food Microbiology – the work of the last ten years from the perspective of this cooperation – to demonstrate the example of good practice in the contribution of mobility to internationalisation. Case study research was conducted to collect, evaluate and analyse data on international cooperation, for the time period from 2007 to 2017. Academic staff and students actively participate before, during and after mobility at a guest and host institution. Optimal transfer of knowledge, skills and attitudes are enabled with intergenerational connection of staff, doctoral students as young researchers and students. Such international cooperation enables productive work and study during mobility, and thus high quality and publishable results. As outcomes, both formal and informal are important – the first contributing to the excellence of research work and education, and the second contributing to development of inclusive society.

Keywords: international mobility, cooperation, tailored training, work excellence, improved quality

Povzetek

Mobilnost je ena od ključnih strategij za izvajanje internacionalizacije v visokem šolstvu, ki združuje tako internacionalizacijo doma kot v tujini. Raziskovalna skupina avtorjev ima dolgoletno izkušnjo v mednarodnem sodelovanju na izobraževalnem in raziskovalnem področju z več institucijami v tujini, ki temelji predvsem na mobilnosti, ki jo zagotavljajo bilateralni projekti, univerzitetne mreže in druga omrežja, ki omogočajo kratkotrajne izmenjave. Namen prispevka je predstaviti primer Laboratorija za živilsko mikrobiologijo – delo zadnjih desetih let z vidika tega sodelovanja – ter prikazati primer dobre prakse doprinosu mobilnosti k internacionalizaciji. Izvedli smo študijo primera ter za obdobje 2007 do 2017 zbrali, ovrednotili in analizirali podatke o mednarodnih sodelovanjih. Akademsko osebje in študenti aktivno sodelujejo pred, med in po mobilnosti, tako na gostujoči kot na gostiteljski instituciji. Medgeneracijsko povezovanje osebja, doktorskih študentov kot mladih raziskovalcev in študentov omogoča optimalen prenos znanja, veščin in odnosov. Takšno mednarodno sodelovanje omogoča produktivno delo in študij tekom mobilnosti ter s tem visoko kakovostne in objavljive rezultate. Kot izidi so pomembni tako formalni kot neformalni – prvi prispevajo k odličnosti raziskovalnega dela in izobraževanja ter drugi k razvoju medkulturne družbe.

Ključne besede: mednarodna mobilnost, sodelovanje, prilagojeno usposabljanje, odličnost dela, izboljšanje kakovosti

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Introduction

The internationalisation of higher education is closely linked to globalisation and to the perception of its importance, both at the state and university or faculty level (Maringe 2010, pp. 17–34). Between globalisation and internationalisation is thus a reciprocal effect (Maringe and Foskett 2010, pp. 1–2), since globalisation accelerates institutional internationalisation, while at the same time the internationalisation of universities further promotes globalisation. Regarding higher education, internationalisation is understood as integration of international or intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions (ibid.). As such, internationalisation is a set of strategic responses that enable competitiveness on the global scale. According to Maringe (2010, pp. 17–34) strategies for internationalisation of higher education are: (I) curriculum internationalisation; (II) recruitment of international students; (III) development of international partnership for teaching and research; and (IV) student and staff exchange programmes.

Mobility is often seen as internationalisation, although this concept is much more. However, mobility is high on the list of priorities for implementation of internationalisation in higher education, which is also confirmed by the exponential growth of mobility (Knight 2012, pp. 20–33). With mobility, the two pillars of internationalisation are distinctly combined – defined as 'at home' and 'cross-border' internationalisation.

The purpose of this paper is to present case 'Food Microbiology' – the work of the last ten years of the research group of the Laboratory for Food Microbiology from the Department of Food Science and Technology (Biotechnical Faculty, University of Ljubljana) from the perspective of international cooperation in educational and research work with several institutions abroad. We wish to demonstrate the example of good practice in the contribution of mobility to internationalisation, which includes four out of the five key areas of the Slovene strategy for internationalisation of higher education presented in 2016 (*Strategy for the internationalisation of Slovenian higher education 2016–2020* 2016, p. 10).

Case study 'Food microbiology' – an example of good practice

Case study research was conducted to collect, evaluate and analyse data on international cooperation of the research group of authors. The time period of the last ten years (2007 to 2017) was selected. For this period, we have reviewed the official reports on international cooperation in order to obtain data on the participating countries, the duration of mobility and the type of mobility (student or staff and incoming or outgoing). Not all, but selected types of cooperation were included: bilateral projects and university (e.g. CEEPUS, ERASMUS) or other networks enabling short-term student/researcher exchanges (e.g. European Cooperation in Science & Technology (COST), Federation of European Microbiological Societies (FEMS) grants). Larger projects with several partners (e.g. EU projects from FP6 and FP7) were excluded from this analysis. Additionally, we examined the records in the COBISS, to collect the data on completed research work (original research articles, review articles, conference contributions – published as articles) and educational work (mentorship and co-mentorship for bachelor, master and doctoral theses, chapters in monographs or university textbooks, lectures at international conferences or university courses). Data on informal outcomes were collected at the same time.

International cooperation in educational and research work

Over the last ten years, research group has worked with research and educational institutions from 12 countries – 11 European countries (Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia) and the United States of America (USA). International cooperation worked through different channels, with the majority of work done

through bilateral projects (Raspor and Smole Možina 2012, p. 420), and mobility through university networks, and less through the more specific scientific programmes (COST projects and FEMS grants) or pedagogical programmes e.g. ATLANTIS cooperation programme in higher education and vocational training between European Union and the USA (Borda 2012, pp. 119–128).

Type	Country	Student mobility (months)		Staff mobility (months)	
		Incoming	Outgoing	Incoming	Outgoing
Bilateral projects	Austria	2	6	0.5	1
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	0	0.5	0.5
	Croatia	4	2	0.5	0.5
	Serbia	1	0	0.5	1
	Slovakia	0	0	1	0
	USA	0	8	0	0
	CEEPUS	Austria	3	32	0
	Croatia	6	8	1	6
	Czech Republic	3	0	0	0
	Hungary	10	2	1	0
	Serbia	14	4	1	0
ERASMUS	Czech Republic	14	8	1	1
	Germany	10	0	0	0
	Italy	18	5	1	1
	Romania	1	5	0	0
ATLANTIS	Romania, USA	1	0	2	2
COST	Portugal	0	2	0	0
	Serbia	2	0	0	0
FEMS	Serbia	6	0	0	0

Table 1: Duration of mobility in months according to type of international cooperation, participating country, and type of mobility (student or staff mobility, and incoming or outgoing mobility).

For easier display of mobility, we recorded them in months. In *Table 1* we present gathered results on student and staff mobility. As seen from the results, student mobility (178 months) predominates over staff mobility (27 months). Furthermore, incoming mobility (106 months) prevailed over outgoing mobility (99 months). The research group gives a prominent importance to students' opportunities for international experience, and enables them mobility within different channels (Smole Možina 2012, pp. 361–374). In doing so, we strive to involve students as much as possible into the ongoing research work of host and/or guest research group. There is much less staff mobility, mainly due to high load of pedagogical work at home institution. However, staff mobility are intended to maintain contacts with cooperating teams in timely and proper planning of experimental work of the students on exchange. This is one of the most critical points of this type of work, which enables productive work and study during the mobility, and finally, high quality and thus publishable results.

The importance of including doctoral students in international work

In mobility, academic staff and students actively participate before, during and after mobility at a guest and host institution. Thus, number of months invested in the international work is actually higher than that shown in *Table 1*. The whole research group (of 3 university teachers and 1 technician) is involved in the work, while doctoral students (2 or 3) as young researchers get an opportunity – both in the research and in the education field (Sterniša et al. 2016, pp. 3–11; Smole Možina et al. 2016, p. 30). Doctoral students are both, staff and students (*Figure 1*), and as such constitute the most direct link

between staff and students. Teamwork with doctoral students contributes to the overall research objective and to the optimal transfer of knowledge, skills and attitudes to younger colleagues.

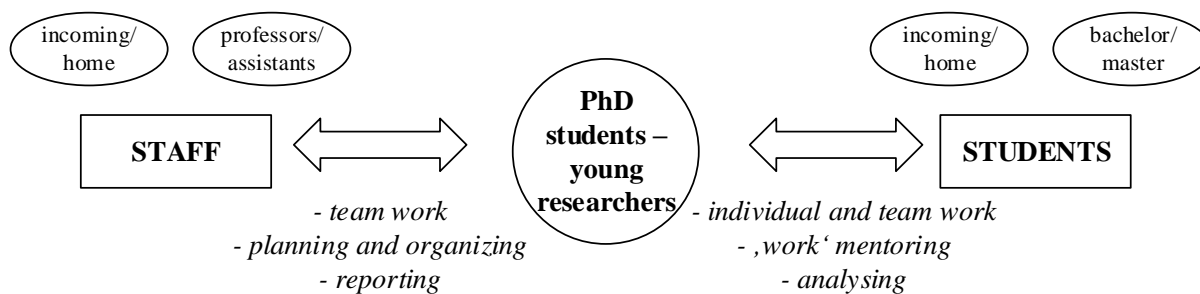


Figure 1: The role of doctoral students in international cooperations

In cooperation with other staff, doctoral students plan and organize research work and teaching. In the course of their work, they are responsible for regular reporting about results, possible improvements and potential challenges, which the team then solves together. In spite of the importance of this communication, greater importance is given to gaining teaching experience. The so-called 'work mentoring' involves working with one or two bachelor or master students on a joint research project. When working in pairs, if possible pairs are international and consisting of students from different levels of study. By individualized approach, doctoral students as working mentors get immediate feedback from younger students on the process, communication and guidance of the students through the research work, which therefore quickly improves. Such work does not only contribute to the progress of the doctoral student, but also to incoming students, and – if included in work – to home students, too. Learning and training tailored to individual students' needs improves quality of education, makes it flexible and contributes to acquisition of knowledge and overall mobility experience of the students.

Outcomes, challenges and advantages

Results related to formal outcomes of international research and educational work for the last ten years are presented in *Table 2*. Despite the relatively short duration of mobility within bilateral projects (27 months), they have proved to be the most productive with formal outcomes. These are the result of connecting the work in the course of mobility as well as work in the home faculty environment. Also the university programmes CEEPUS and ERASMUS contributed to the research outcomes, but to a lesser extent. There were more educational outcomes, especially in the form of mentorship or co-mentorship for bachelor, master or doctoral theses. In the future, we should also focus on improving international cooperation in less represented forms, e.g. preparing lectures at universities in joint study programmes, doctoral and master theses as final outcomes in such joint study programmes and international educational publications. To sum up, the cooperation allows us to reach the goals, which can not be accomplished without international collaboration and expertise on complementary methods and equipment in specialized laboratories of the cooperating groups.

Despite the high productivity of mobility, however, there are still administrative obstacles and lack of funding. Despite co-financing all of the programmes for mobility, this often does not cover all the costs of the mobility, and therefore a financial capacity of students is often a limiting factor for mobility.

Mobility of staff and students has many positive effects for individuals, research groups and their institutions. Beside above described formal outcomes, also informal ones are important, sometimes even more important than the formal ones. The entire international team works together to achieve a common research objective, and at the same time to promote knowledge transfer between colleagues and generations. Most of the mobility is focused on students acquiring knowledge and experience, by giving them the possibility of a project work with other researchers. Hereby, students

gain experience in research, develop laboratory skills and critical thinking, learn to process obtained data, report results and write scientific papers. The students can gain specific skills from this research environment, but at the same time they learn about new culture and how to accept diversity, improve communication skills, adaptability, independence, tolerance and cooperation. All involved in mobility are experiencing the international environment, practice foreign language, learn about new culture, but at the same time also represent their own. Finally, good interpersonal and professional relationships develop. This improves the competencies of researchers and students of both groups involved in future project applications, and increases the potential for successful international cooperation in general. Concerning the quality of study, we believe that we contribute to the improved future employability of the students – by filling the gap between their knowledge, skills and attitudes and the needs of the employers. They are looking more and more for ‘multitasking workers’, so we can say that adaptability is one of the most important skills of young professionals searching for the first job – and internationally mobile students can get a good experience in this, we can conclude that their training in conditions of the project work in international environment is 'a perfect school of adaptability'. From the experience with our students on international exchange and their employment later on after finishing their study, it is obvious that the employers respect very much this type of skills. In this way we contribute to the development of interculturally connected society.

Type	Educational work		Research work			
	Lectures at intern. conferences or university courses	Theses	Chapters in monographs or university textbooks	Original research articles	Review article	Conference contributions (published as whole articles)
Bilateral projects	8	1	5	28	1	7
CEEPUS	4	4	0	5	0	6
ERASMUS	3	6	0	4	0	0
FEMS	0	0	0	1	0	0
COST	0	0	0	0	0	0
ATLANTIS	8	0	0	0	1	1

Table 2: Formal outcomes of international research and educational work for the time period of the last ten years (2007 to 2017)

Conclusions

With case 'Food Microbiology' we address four out of five key areas of the Slovene strategy for internationalisation of higher education. Mobility is (I) an integral component of educational and research work in our research group; (II) vital for establishment and maintenance of quality international scientific research and development of long-lasting cooperation; (III) important driver for the development of intercultural and interpersonal competences of students and staff; (IV) focused mostly on countries defined in the strategy as priority.

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EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONALISATION ON TEACHING AND LEARNING OF INTERACTIVE MEDIA DESIGN

Evalvacija vpliva internacionalizacije na poučevanje in učenje oblikovanja interaktivnih medijev

Andrej Iskra¹ and Helena Gabrijelčič Tomc²

Abstract

In this research, the possibilities of improving the teaching and learning processes by involving the international aspects are discussed in the field of planning and production of web and digital media. The research involved the analysis of teaching and learning processes at 1st and 2nd level study courses of web design and computer graphic and animation design. The research was performed at three levels: 1. teaching process by implementation and evaluation of different approaches of performing lectures, practical exercises and mentoring an individual and/or group project work; 2. studying processes and learning by evaluation of the results of written/oral exams and final projects work and 3. analysis of the experiences and well-being of the Slovene and Erasmus+ students attending the classes. The results show that effectiveness of teachers' work is influenced by the implementing the international dimensions, yet they still prefer to have separate lectures for Slovene and foreign students. Students evaluated that their skills and knowledge considerably improved after the courses. When considering different aspects of studying process the two students' groups experienced the learning and collaborative process of new media differently, what emphasizes the importance of having equal number of Slovene and foreign students attending courses and of considering their different cultural and social background.

Keywords: internationalisation, interactive media design, teaching process, learning process

Povzetek

V raziskavi je analiziran način možnosti izboljšanja procesov poučevanja ter učenja z vključitvijo pristopov internacionalizacije na področju načrtovanja in produkcije spletnih mest ter digitalnih medijev. Raziskava je vključevala analizo procesov poučevanja in učenja predmetov spletnega oblikovanja ter oblikovanja v računalniški grafiki in animacijah 1. in 2. stopnje študijev grafike. Analiza je potekala na treh nivojih, in sicer: 1. v procesu poučevanja, v katerega je so bili vpeljeni novi (dvojezični) načini izvedbe predavanja, praktičnega dela ter mentoriranja dela posameznikov ter skupine; 2. v študijskem ter učnem procesu z ocenjevanjem rezultatov pisnih/ustnih izpitov ter končnih rezultatov projektov in 3. kot analiza izkušnje in doživljanja sloveskih študentov ter študentov na izmenjavi, ki so bili vključeni v izvedbo predmetov. Rezultati so pokazali, da internacionalne dimenzije vplivajo na učinkovitost dela učiteljev, ki pa tudi po izkušnji skupnega poučevanja internacionalnih skupin, želijo pri svojem delu nadaljevati s poučevanjem ločenih skupin. Študenti so ocenili, da so se njihovo znanje in kompetence bistveno izboljšali po skupnem izvajanju študijskih obveznosti. Pri analizi različnih aspektov študijskega procesa obeh skupin (lokalnih študentov ter študentov na izmenjavi), so rezultati pokazali razlike v doživljanju in mnenju o skupnem izvajanju študija oblikovanja novih medijev v večjezičnih skupinah, kar poudarja pomen izenačenega števila slovenskih ter tujih udeležencev predmetov ter upoštevanje različnega kulturnega ter socialnega ozadja obeh skupin.

Ključne besede: internacionalizacija, oblikovanje interaktivnih medijev, proces poučevanja, proces učenja

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Introduction

New media are defined as forms of media that are native to computers. The manifestation of this media is possible due to the computation and synthesis of output data that occur in digital space. The term is often interchangeably used in connection with the terms digital media and interactive media, as they are going to be used also in this paper. The processes of conceptualizing, planning, designing, producing, post producing, presenting and exhibiting these media are being implemented in social sciences and computing, humanities, the sensory arts and design. Consequently, also the research and education in the field of new media design and production are definitely multi-layered processes that demand the interdisciplinary approach of the authors and creators (Bovcon 2009, pp. 45–75; Rush 2005, pp. 86–180; Garrand 2006, pp. 3–41).

Teaching and learning processes have to include user-centered design of interactive media that means the framework of working phases, in which special attention is given to the users, their behavior and thinking, the environment of the use of the product (media), usability goals and especially the context of the media consumption (Noyes 1999, pp. 103–118). User-centered design is a multi-stage problem-solving process that is above all focused on the testing and the analysis of user behavior, experience and immersion when interacting with the product (media). Besides, the evaluation of the usability and consummation of the product is performed in many consecutive phases of the product development, design, production and its actual use. Most important is the context of the product's use that spreads the user-centered design into the wider prospective of entire experience of the use of the product, i.e. user experience. Researcher Don Norman explains the background of the development of the term user experience as everything that touches upon the user's experience about the product, even if it is only explaining to someone the experience when interacting with the product (Norman 2013, pp. 1–74).

When considering designer (the creator) and user (the consumer of the product), the factors of media productions have to include: 1. context of the creating and using the media (the creator - author, the user) and production tools; 2. user and creator personal and professional state and 3. properties of the technological system and the context of its use (Tullis 2013, pp. 41–61; Cooper 2007, pp. 49–99).

Planning and production of interactive media are usually performed with two main focuses: to make aware the creative process of the designer when planning and producing the media and augmenting the users' experience. Here, the designer's work is involved in the multi-layered process of designing user's experience, by means of five elements of user design, involving the layers of strategy, scope, structure skeleton and surface (Garrett 2011, pp. 18–31).

The majority of interactive media is supposed to be designed with the purpose to attract globally, due to prevalent publication, promotion and sharing in the web environment. As a consequence, sensory rhetoric (visual, auditory, tactile) that is designed and implemented in the media should be culturally-intelligent (Moore 2010, pp. 20–57; Gillette 1999, pp. 15–17). Moreover, not only conceptualisation and design, but also analysis and evaluation of the media should be oriented considering cultural differences (Hall 2004, pp. 489–503; Nawar 2013, pp. 383–393; Anthony 2005, pp. 37–394).

The review of the references showed that there is a lack of documentation and evaluation of the impact and comparison that the teaching and learning have on the creative process of media design, its results and experience of the teachers and students, when they are performed on separate and mixed groups of local and foreign students. This was a motivation for our research, which aim was the analysis and evaluation of newly implemented concepts in higher educational process (when bilingual teaching and collaborative studying is used in multicultural groups of students) and the comparison of study results and experiences of home and foreign students in the field of interactive media design.

The research was performed as preliminary, i.e. as a research based on opinion survey and interviews performed on teachers and students involved in the courses of interactive media design.

Methods

The research involved the analysis of teaching and learning processes during three semesters at 1st and 2nd level study courses of web production, computer graphic and animation. The predominantly used form of teaching at the department before this experiment was the lecturing and mentoring of local and foreign students separately, while this research presents the approach of teaching the subjects in two languages simultaneously (i.e. lecturing and mentoring in Slovene and English), for Slovene students (enrolled in the subjects) and students on the Erasmus+ and Ceepus exchange. Foreign students came from eight different European countries: Belgium (2 students), Greece (2 students), Croatia (1 student), Germany (1 student), Poland (1 student), Slovakia (1 student) and Spain (2 students). Number of these students was 10 and all of them had previous experience of one, two or three years of study of graphic and media design. Here it has to be mentioned that at the department each semester from 2 to 4 students choose facultative subject of interactive media design (3D graphic, web design). Number of Slovene students involved in the experiment was 40, and all were enrolled in university study program Graphic and interactive communication (1st and 2nd level).

In the analysis, the study obligations were carried out in different combinations of Slovene and English languages (i.e. separate and simultaneously) in lectures, practical and project work for two groups of students. The research was performed at three levels: 1. studying the teaching process by implementation and evaluation of performing lectures (6 teachers involved), practical exercises and mentoring of individual and/or group project work separately for Slovene and mobility students and in mixed groups; 2. studying processes of learning by evaluation of the results of written/oral exams and final projects and 3. analysing the experiences and well-being of Slovene (forty students involved) and Erasmus+ and Ceepus students (ten students involved) attending the classes. The methodology involved on-line questionnaires (teachers, students), personal interviews (students) and qualitative evaluation and comparison of projects' results. In the questionnaires the persons were asked to evaluate or rank the statements that were proposed with the grades from 1 (not suitable/completely disagree), 2 (satisfactory/neither agree nor disagree), 3 (good/nearly agree), 4 (very good/agree) and 5 (excellent solution/completely agree).

Results and discussion

Evaluation of the teaching process

In the analysis six teachers were involved (3 male and 3 female) among which three persons were assistants (performing exercises and practical work) and three professors (performing lectures and mentoring project work). The average number of years they are teaching foreign students (Erasmus+, Ceepus) is 6,8. The analysis of teaching process was performed with online questionnaires. In *Fig. 1* the evaluation of the opinion about the performance of lecturing and teaching is presented. In *Fig. 2* the evaluation of how the teachers estimate the impacts of the educative process on their own academic development and on the students (their work and creativity).

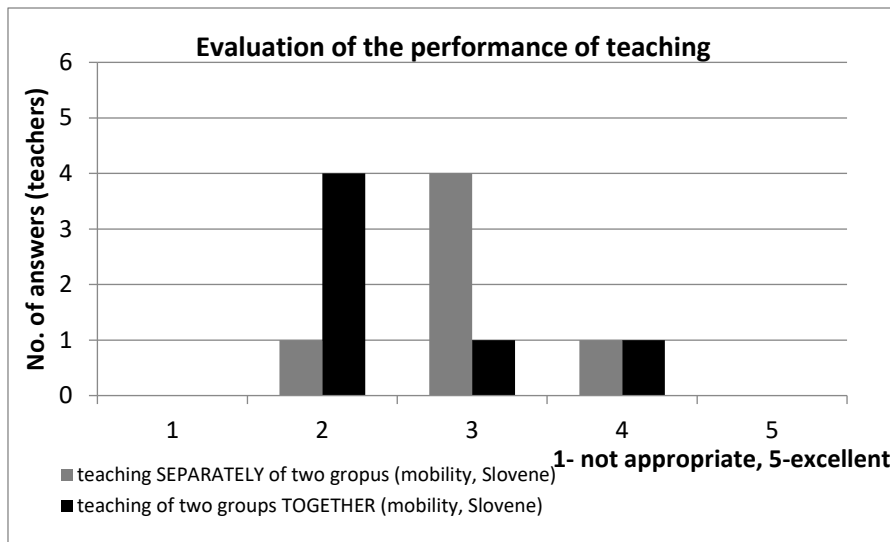


Figure 1: The evaluation of the performance of lecturing and teaching by 6 teachers on a 5-point scale, where points mean: 1 – not suitable, 2 – satisfactory, 3 – good, 4 – very good and 5 – excellent solution

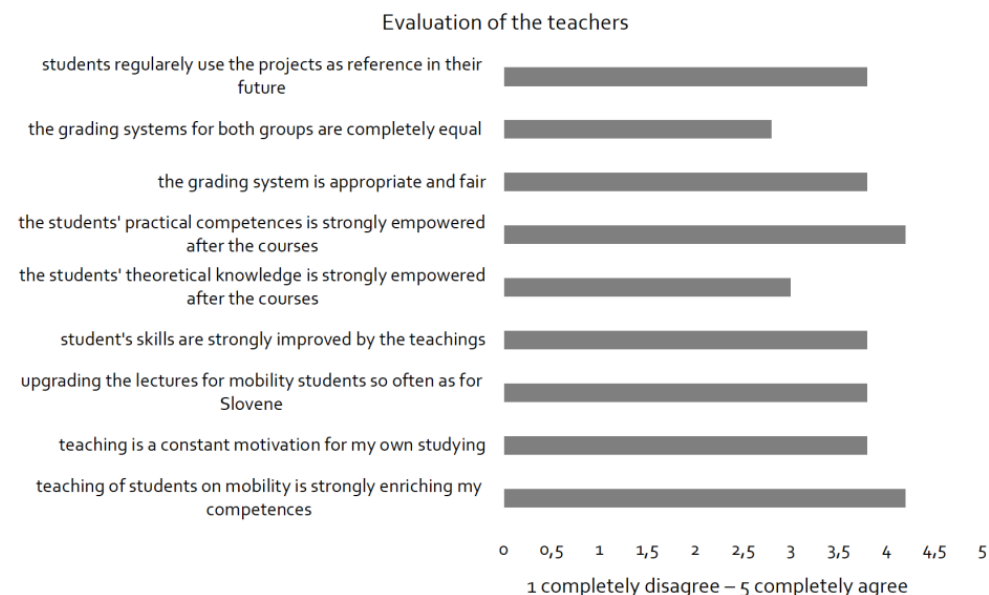


Figure 2: The evaluation of how the teachers (N= 6) see the impacts of the educative process on their own academic development and on the students (on a 5-point scale, where points mean: 1 – completely disagree, 2 – neither agree nor disagree, 3 – nearly agree, 4 – agree and 5 – completely agree)

After the test period of performing the bilingual courses, it can be seen that the teachers are quite confident with the transfer of knowledge and the impact their teaching have on the students, so that they evaluate that students' skills are considerably improved by the teaching (grade 4). After the experiment, they prefer the separate performance of lecturing and mentoring that include individual approach of the home and mobility students. The teachers evaluated that the practical competences of media design are more strongly empowered during the courses (grade 4,5) than theoretical knowledge (grade 3) and that students use regularly the final results of the projects as a reference for their future work (grade 4). Besides, the teachers' have an opinion that the teaching of foreign students and in bilingual groups is a motivation for their own studying and that is enriching their own

competences. What is surprising is that even if the teachers think that their evaluation (grading) system is appropriate, they tend to grade differently the final results of home and foreign students.

In fact, analysis of the results of written/oral exams and quantitative evaluation of final projects work revealed that teachers tend to give higher grades for the same level of the final results' quality to the participants of the student mobility. Besides, for these students there are mainly oral exams and not written as for Slovene students.

The analysis of the quality of technical (information architecture of web site, topology of 3D meshes, variability and correctness of applied animation techniques), design (graphic and sensory rhetoric) and applicative (visualisation, usability) aspects of the projects' results has shown that the foreign students as visiting group in generally use slightly wider scope of graphic and design elements and implement finer aesthetics of the media. However, there are not so obvious differences in implementation of technical skills, with the exception of optimising solutions of website server hosting, that has each year a lower level of products' dynamic and interactivity. Moreover, final presentations and product promotion that the group of foreign students gave were simpler, giving only tips of how the media design challenge was solved and not, as Slovene students in generally did, the more complex schemes and concepts of their work. The competitiveness between the local, Slovene students is somehow more pronounced giving to these students the motivation for presentation of their work at a higher level.

Studying and learning processes and experiencing the international collaboration

In the analysis fifty students were involved: ten students on the mobility (half of them female and half them male) and forty Slovene students (80 % female and 20 % male).

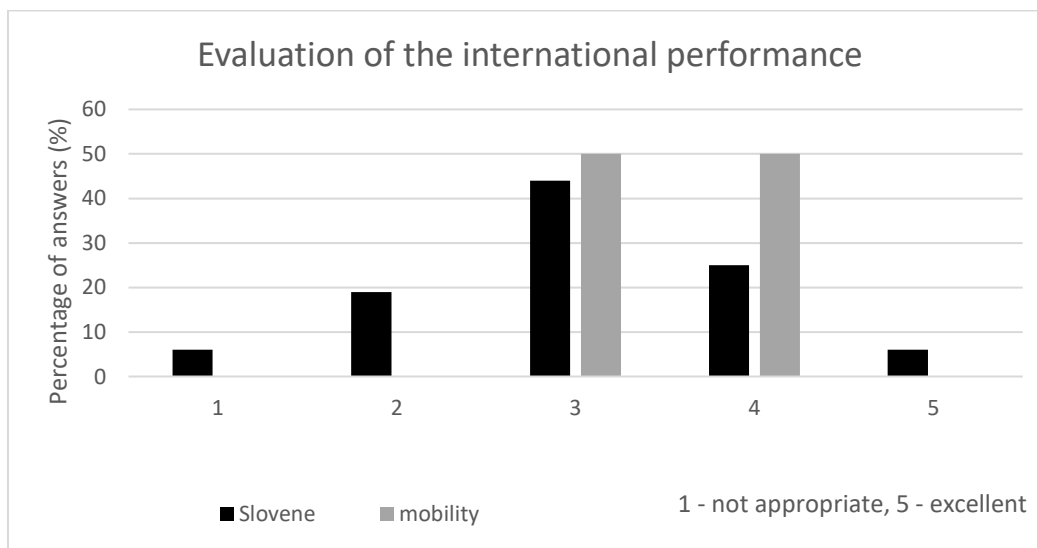


Figure 3: Evaluation of the international (bilingual) performance on a 5-point scale, where points mean: 1 – not appropriate, 2 – satisfactory, 3 – good, 4 – very good and 5 – excellent (No. of Slovene students = 40, No. of foreign students = 10)

Most of the students have evaluated that the lectures and practical work that were performed together as international group were satisfactory (grade 3) and very good (grade 4), however there are differences between the opinion of Slovene and foreign students. The latter, as a minority, were in generally more in favor of collaborating with the local students.

Comparison: intercultural and international dimensions

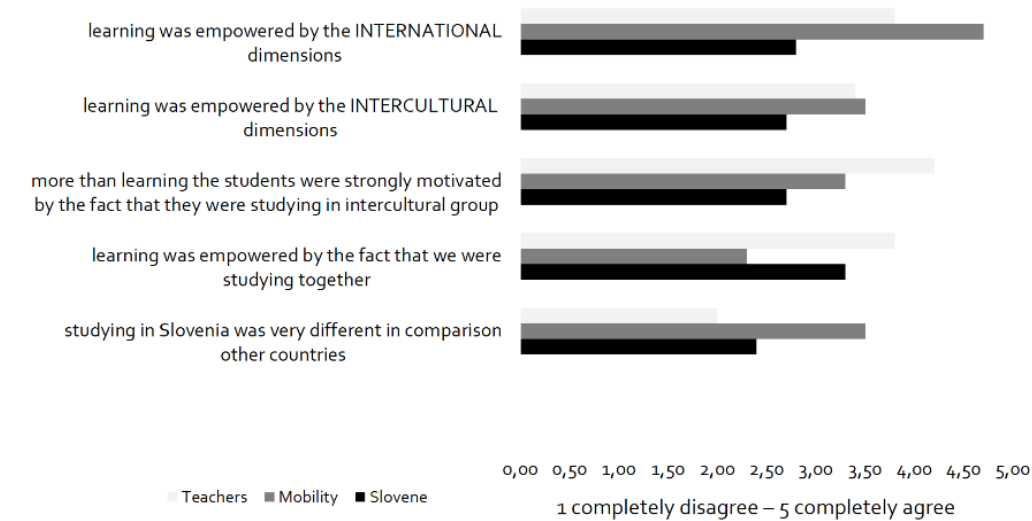
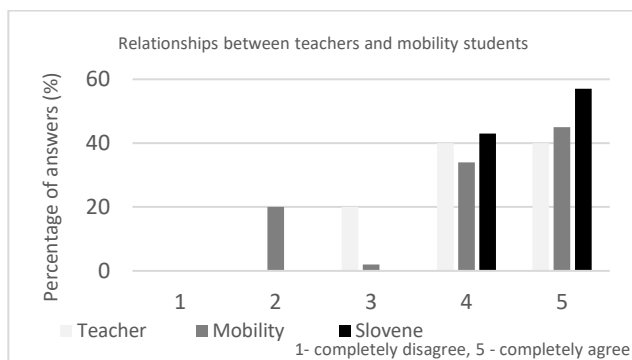


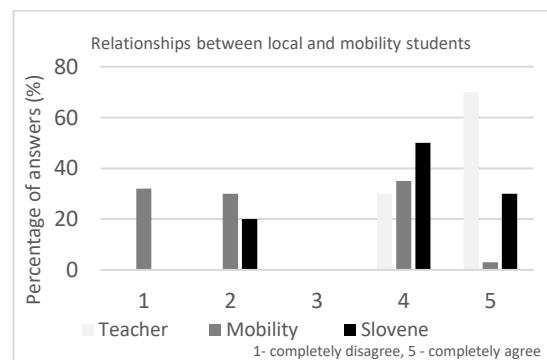
Figure 4: Comparison of intercultural and international aspects of the study performance on a 5-point scale, where points mean: 1 – completely disagree, 2 – neither agree nor disagree, 3 – nearly agree, 4 – agree and 5 – completely agree (No. of Slovene students = 40, No. of foreign students = 10)

In Fig. 4 it can be seen that teachers and foreign students felt more strongly the influence of international and intercultural aspects of the performance of teaching and learning. The main reason for these results is probably the fact that Slovene students were the largest group involved in the analysis. Besides, Erasmus+ and Ceepus students admitted that more than learning in the professional field, they were motivated by the fact that they were studying in the culturally different environment but not so by the fact that they were studying together. Moreover, these students discovered that the studying programs of graphic and media design in their countries differed to noticeable extend from Slovene education approaches (grade 3,7).

Figs. 5a and 5b present the evaluation of how did the participants experience the relationships between foreign students and the teachers/Slovene students. The participants’ opinion was tested with the following questions: “Please give your opinion, weather your studying of new media design was supported by good relationships with Slovene teachers (open communications, regular meetings, individual and additional mentoring)/Slovene students (friendships, open communication, meetings at the faculty and during your free time)?” and “Do you find Slovene teachers/students very open and respectful for the Erasmus+ and Ceepus students?”



a.)



b.)

Figure 5: The evaluation of the relationships between foreign students and the teachers/Slovene students on a 5-point scale, where points mean: 1 – completely disagree, 2 – neither agree nor disagree, 3 – nearly agree, 4 – agree and 5 – completely agree. (No. of Slovene students = 40, No. of foreign students = 10)

In Fig. 5b there is an obvious difference in the evaluations about the relationships between the students of both group. Slovene students and teachers found that the collaboration in the projects of local and foreign group was enriched by good relationships, while this was not the case of Erasmus+ and Ceepus students that had an experience of not sufficiently open (transparent) communication and a low level of respect for them. On the contrary, teachers and foreign students developed more quality relationships with higher level of respect, regular meetings, additional and individual consultations and open communication.

In Fig. 6 the foreign students' opinion about the transfer of the knowledge of design trends and best practice on local and international level is presented. In Fig. 7 the evaluation of the transferability of the projects results that Erasmus+ and Ceepus students achieve in Slovene courses and the applicability of these results as references in further studies and work is presented.

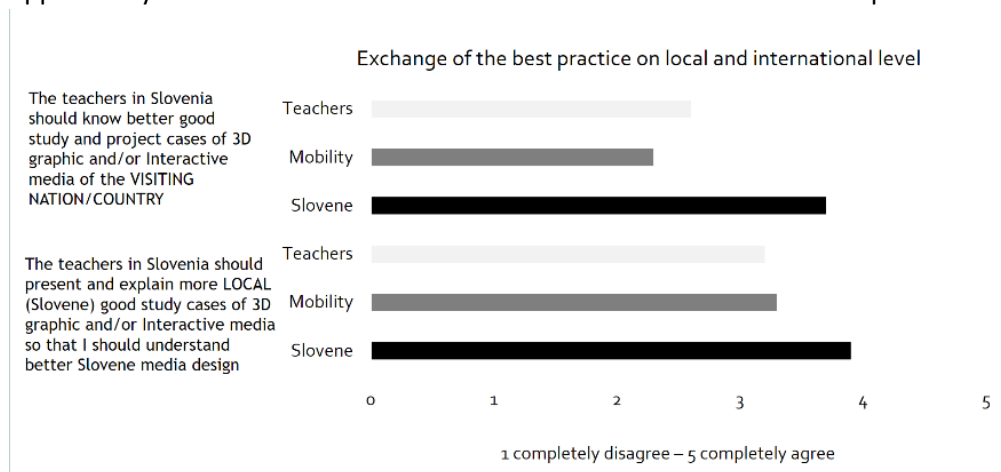


Figure 6: Exchange of trends and best practice on local and international level on a 5-point scale, where points mean: 1 – completely disagree, 2 – neither agree nor disagree, 3 – nearly agree, 4 – agree and 5 – completely agree. (No. of foreign students = 10)

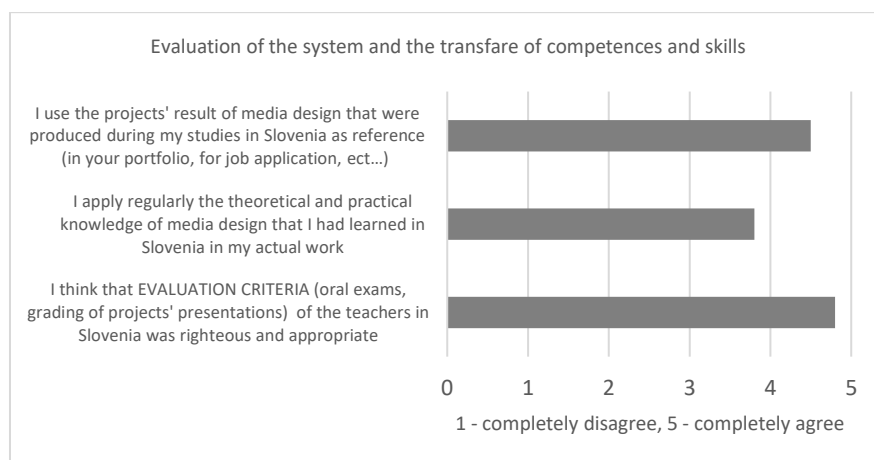


Figure 7: Evaluation of the system and the transfer of competences and skills on a 5-point scale, where points mean: 1 – completely disagree, 2 – neither agree nor disagree), 3 – nearly agree, 4 – agree and 5 – completely agree. (No. of foreign students = 10)

In Fig. 6 it is evident that Slovene students would like to learn and study more about the local and international media design, what certainly expresses their ambition to be motivated with locally, nationally oriented design but also presentations of approaches that have cultural and social different backgrounds. The foreign students prefer to be taught in-depth about the Slovene (local) best practice and not about their local study cases.

The results in Fig. 7 present that Erasmus+ and Ceepus students evaluated very highly the teachers (grade 4,7) and the transferability of the results of media design that they achieved in their further professional path (grade 4,5). However, their opinion is that the theoretical and practical knowledge is less important in their actual work and creativity (grade 3,7).

In Fig. 8 the self-evaluation of the knowledge and skills of both students' groups before and after attending courses od media design is presented.

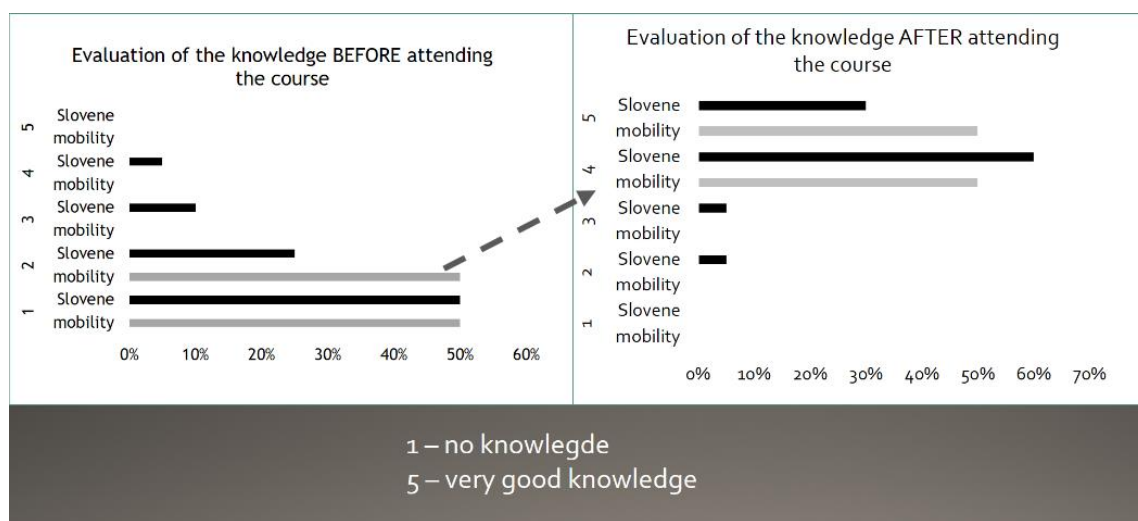


Figure 8: The results of self-evaluation of the knowledge and skills of both groups of students before and after attending courses of media design on a 5-point scale, where points mean: 1 – no knowledge, 2 – very little knowledge, 3 – little knowledge, 4 – good knowledge and 5 – very good knowledge (No. of Slovene students = 40, No. of foreign students = 10)

In Fig. 8 it is evident that both groups of students evaluated that the attendance in the courses benefited extensively their knowledge and skills of new media design and production. The results are more homogenous for foreign students that graded the improvement of their knowledge with 2 grades (grades 1 and 2 before courses and 4 and 5 after the courses). The results of the Slovene students as a larger group are to some extent more scattered between proposed grades.

Conclusions

In the presented paper new findings about the introduction of international dimensions in teaching and learning processes of interactive media design are presented.

The results presented some discrepancies in the effectiveness of implementing the international dimensions in teaching and and learning processes in multicultural groups. Teaching process was found to be enriched, especially with the introduction of new teaching concepts and mutual exchange of the knowledge and studying results among Slovene students and students on the exchange. However, they prefer to have separate mentoring and lecturing of both groups in their future work. When learning

processes were analysed, it was discovered that they are influenced by the social and cultural background of the students, therefore the strategy and planning phase of digital media production are influenced by the context of social circumstances and studying habits that the students were exposed before they were attending the courses of digital media production. The differences were evident specially by means of quality of intermediate and final presentations and final results (graphic visualisations, animations, web solutions) and, moreover, by the different levels of international aspects of the interactive media that were designed and produced by Slovene and Erasmus+ students. The study of students' experiences found out differences in quality and quantity of impact of Slovene students on foreign students and vice versa. As expected, Slovene students, as a larger group, were found to be less influenced by the implementation of internationalisation in the studying process, on the other hand students on the exchange were obviously more interested in reinforcing the projects' and personal collaboration with Slovene students.

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