



Education Project as a Means for Developing Teachers' Intercultural Communicative Competence

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Abstract

The internationalisation process in the EHEA harmonising the national systems of education, institutions of higher education and the study programmes points out the necessity of educating teachers being able to work and communicate with people of other cultures. The presentation reviews the researchers' attitudes towards the opportunities of educating university graduates to be "interculturally competent" [1] and highlights several tendencies. First, the issue of readiness of HE institutions for participation in the process of internationalisation is discussed [2, 3], and the importance of training intercultural mentors responsible for international affairs of the institution pointed out [1]. Second, the scientists state that the features of internationalisation can be traced out in the new or renewed study programmes aiming at developing students' Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) [4]. The component of experience is recommended to be integrated into the teacher training study programmes [5, 6, 7] that would enable teachers to assess their attitudes towards other cultures and develop a higher level of ICC. Transformation in the teachers' worldview is considered to be of great importance while preparing them to work with students representing different cultures, therefore, methods of reflection are emphasized in teacher training [7]. Third, it has been unanimously acknowledged, that the best way to assess the level of one's ICC is to experience the natural encounters with the other culture [8]. The scientists stress the responsibility of practitioners-educators who have to ensure that students derive as much benefit as possible from time abroad [9, 10].

The second part of the presentation is based on the empirical study carried out to explore the opportunities to develop teachers' ICC within the context of eight European Teacher Training institutions – Cá Foscari University, Pedagogical University of Tirol, University of Cyprus, School of Education of Aarhus University, University of Nantes, E. Loránd University in Budapest, Jagiellonian University in Krakow and Vilnius University. Firstly, the data of the diagnostic survey that revealed the respondents' (teacher trainers' and student teachers') attitudes towards the importance of integrating Intercultural education into the curriculum of a mobility term is presented. Secondly, the possibilities of developing teachers' ICC within the framework of a designed education project and carried out in the socio-cultural context of Lithuania is described.

References

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