

# Information Adaptation of International University Students under the Conditions of Multicultural Educational Environment

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Received October 10, 2018; Revised November 13, 2018; Accepted November 20, 2018

**Abstract** The global trend of growing academic mobility for both of university students and educators lead to increase of number of international students getting education in Ukraine. The quality level of training specialists for foreign countries in Ukrainian universities greatly depends on effective organization of educational process and socio-cultural and information adaptation of international students. The article presents the ways for adapting foreign students to multinational educational environment. The technology includes moving up by three stages of informational progress from direct management through co-management to self-management of activity. Pedagogical means are proposed at each stage. They are widely implemented in the educational process of Kharkiv Institute of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. It is concluded that information adaptation of foreign students should be based on personality-oriented, activity-oriented and communication-oriented approaches.

**Keywords:** foreign students, information adaptation, multicultural environment, educational technology

**Cite This Article:** Zhanna Davydova, Olga Balyuk, and Dzheren Kurbanova, "Information Adaptation of International University Students under the Conditions of Multicultural Educational Environment." *Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2018): 90-92. doi: 10.12691/jsa-2-2-9.

## 1. Introduction

Social and political changes in Ukraine and in the world for the last several years have become the basis for improving the level of academic mobility and strengthening educational co-operation at the global level. In Paris Communiqué of the Xth conference of the Ministers of Education it was emphasized that the success was achieved in implementing standards and leading principles for granting the quality in European area of higher education into national and institutional practice of the countries. It is reflected in providing quality to education and accepting education quality in the boundaries of EAHE [1].

European Union has developed program "Erasmus+" in the sphere of education, which makes the conditions for students to study abroad and also for educators to take active part in international projects. The aim of the program "Erasmus+" is modernization and improvement of higher education quality both in Europe and in other parts of the world. It gives the opportunity for students and lecturers to develop their skills and opens wider prospects for finding job. Higher educational establishments of EU countries can co-operate with universities not only in Europe, but also in Asia, Africa, Latin America to help them to develop their educational systems.

Implementing innovational reforms into Ukrainian education contributed to recognizing its high quality in professional training of foreign specialists.

Such objective processes lead to increase of number of international students who want to get higher education in Ukraine. On the 1 January 2018 there were about 66 thousand foreign students. The most popular specialties are medical once, which comprise 45%, and also Management, Law, Economics and Building.

**Table 1. Statistical information on international students in Ukraine 2017-2018 [2]**

Country of origin	Percentage of total (%)	Number
India	16,4	10884
Azerbaijani	11,3	7522
Morocco	8,8	5865
Turkmenistan	6,7	4447
Nigeria	4,9	3277
Georgia	4,2	2774
Turkey	4,1	2693
Egypt	3,8	2551
Uzbekistan	3,5	2304
Jordan	3,2	2146

For many universities internationalization of educational activity is a strategy that is of paramount importance.

Developing international educational programs, projects, academic exchange, conducting cross-cultural studies open the way for universities to enter the international educational environment [3].

The quality level of training specialists for foreign countries in Ukrainian universities greatly depends on effective organization of educational process and socio-cultural and information adaptation of foreign students.

The objective of the article is study of pedagogical conditions of information adaptation of foreign university students under the conditions of multicultural educational environment.

## 2. Methods

In accordance with the purpose of the process the following research methods are used: analysis and synthesis of scientific medical and educational literature and international public documents to assess the current situation and trends in international students education; analysis of innovative activity in the defined area to develop own effective methods of information adaptation for international students; analysis and synthesis of experience of students educational and social activity; observations and expert assessment method to identify the results of the work.

## 3. Results and Discussion

The process of international students adaptation to educational and information environment of the university is a complicated, multilevel process. Its complexity lies first of all in the fact that it can't be unified for students from different countries as they belong to different cultures, have different value orientations, originate from different information environments [4].

The educational process of foreign citizens in multicultural environment is the main means of transmitting intellectual component, which greatly determines further professional development of a prospective specialist. The educational process is interconnected with the process of socialization of foreign students in Ukrainian universities. Its effectiveness is first of all based on information and psychological adaptation.

Arriving to study in another country foreign students find themselves in completely different information area. In their educational activity they have to overcome difficulties of simultaneous intensive learning of the new language, professional subjects and also adapt to new information environment surrounding them in everyday life. Information oversaturation at all levels of educational activity and outside of it at the beginning of adaptation process leads to emotional overstraining.

The process of information adaptation of foreign students will be effective if it is organized as a holistic humanistic multicultural education on the base of personality and activity-oriented approach with participating in social and personally significant activity. Such an activity should comprise different kinds of information-cognitive activity (intellectual development); moral-oriented activity (moral development); aesthetic-oriented activity (aesthetic

development). Such a combination of activities lead to formation of information culture of students which is one of the important factors of successful educational and further educational activity and also social protection of a personality in information society [5].

According to any pedagogical technology the first stage of educational activity is formation of motivational component and making the basis for further knowledge, skills and habits. So at the first stage of information adaptation it is necessary to make the students ready for acquiring new information environment and themselves in it. Such readiness should be expressed in the following: readiness to enrich their vocabulary with international lexis and to use it; readiness to acquire inonational cultural phenomena in new educational environment; readiness to conduct educational-cognitive interaction with representatives of other cultures in a strange language; readiness to communicate.

The main condition of information adaptation of foreign students is their gradual moving up from the level of direct management through co-management to the level of self-management of their activity.

At the first stage the foreign students should have curators who can help them to orientate in new information environment. They should provide the information in portions and gradually lead them in surrounding environment.

In order to prepare foreign students for living and study in another country, educational curriculum provides a range of academic disciplines for familiarization with social and cultural peculiarities of Ukraine. Among these disciplines are History of Ukraine and Culture of Ukraine. Also national characteristics from different sides are reflected in other social-humanitarian disciplines (Life safety and Bioethics, Fundamentals of Moral and Ethics, Basics of Communication). Such academic course as Cross-cultural communication is widely implemented into the educational process of Ukrainian Universities.

The important component of information adaptation of foreign students is study of the national language of the country. Such classes provide several functions. First of all it is direct function – mastering the national language gives the opportunity to integrate into the society through understanding and using written and oral communication. The second, any language is a sign-symbolic system, so in the process of acquiring it recoding of existing signs and symbols happens and also new ones appear. The third, language concentrates the cultural heritage of the nation so its studying is inextricably linked with immersion in cultural traditions.

At this stage the crucial role is played by a teacher who is a bearer of information in new reality that surrounds a foreign student.

At the second stage of information adaptation the students should move up to the level of co-management of their activity. After a certain time of staying in the country, they have already obtained basic representations and language skills. At this stage of information the important step is implementing students into the educational-practical activity. Such activity might include excursions to cultural-historic places of our country, visiting theatres, museums etc.

Interesting and useful extracurricular activities are organizing Days of National Cultures where students can

present their country in different ways. Such practice of organizing such events takes place in Kharkiv Institute of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, in which students mostly from African (Nigeria, Ghana, Egypt) and Asian (India, Bangladesh, Sri-Lanka) countries study. Student prepare the information presentation about sociocultural, political, economic characteristics of the country, a fragment of cultural-leisure art such as dancing or singing and also dishes of national cuisine.

In the process of such events cultural exchange among the representatives of different countries takes place which allows to understand better national peculiarities of the participants of multicultural educational environment and to adapt to co-existence during the period of study at university.

At the last stage of information adaptation students should move up to the level of self-management of their activity. The useful factor will be for senior students, who have already obtained the experience, to supervise and to help the students who have just arrived to study in Ukraine and tuned out in the situation of information shock. For this efficient is organizing corporate educational events for students of different ages of study in the process of which active communication between its participants takes place. There can be student scientific clubs, dispute meetings, student conferences, sports events and competitions of different kinds.

Interesting event is reflection of memories about the start of study in Ukraine. Senior students speak about their first impressions and difficulties they had and ways of overcoming them. Students usually have creative approach to such an event and even perform the situations often in humorous form and invite junior students to solve the problem. It is a very demonstrative way to present the obstacles and difficulties of information adaptation of foreign students. At this level the majority of senior

students has already got high enough level of information culture of the country and can operate in multicultural environment.

## 4. Conclusion

So information adaptation of foreign students is one of the crucial backgrounds for obtaining informational culture in multicultural educational environment. It should be organized according to the stages of educational technology through gradual moving up students from the level of direct management through co-management to the level of self-management of their activity using the pedagogical means of personality-oriented, activity-oriented and communicative approaches.

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