

Abstract

International universities have always played different roles in terms of their syllabus, international staff and the languages they have used in higher education. They are the places where students from different cultures and beliefs come, meet and study together. As the international universities are the mosaic of different cultural values and beliefs the universities' educational policies, syllabuses and academic staff should reflect this phenomenon. Sometimes they contribute a lot to the students as well as the society they are functioning in but sometimes they may not be as successful as they are supposed to be due to the fact that they are not able to present global and multicultural programs.

On the one hand, it is difficult to educate people at international universities because teachers have to balance and make connection between their syllabi and those of educational institutions where students received fundamental education in their own countries. On the other hand, by taking the psychologies of students of different cultures and their beliefs into consideration, it is a great advantage for students to learn foreign languages, to be aware of multiculturalism and to have a wide environment.

In this paper I will focus on the ways of being successful and being preferred for the international universities to tolerate all the students regardless their cultures, beliefs, nationalities, skin colors and their races, respect their ideas and set up an atmosphere in which they can easily make friends.

Key Words: International Staff; Globalization; Multicultural Programs

A) *THE ROLE OF MULTI-CULTURAL UNIVERSITIES*

We can all clearly see that Bologna Process, developments in the curriculums, distance learning, internet access, benefiting from technology, and other factors will bring novelties and changes, and contribute a lot to higher education. But there are some other points that we generally ignore or do not appreciate; they are: social, cultural, pedagogical and psychological aspects of international universities. In this paper I mainly focus on these issues.

1) **Importance of international universities**

First of all International universities contribute to peace in the world by bringing many different nations and different personalities and creating an atmosphere in which these international students learn the art of living together in a very friendly and peaceful way. The role of professors at the international universities should be both delivering lectures and creating a warm milieu. Gebhard expresses his ideas about this issue like:

Teachers can teach concepts that not only can bring about appreciation for people and culture but also can be useful for students when the students are placed in cross cultural communication situations. The four concepts are

- 1- Cross cultural communication includes adaptative behavior.
- 2- Cross cultural communication involves problem solving.
- 3- To understand a culture, get to know individuals.
- 4- To understand another culture, study your own. Gebhard (1996- 119)

Each international student can bring personal contributions to the classroom and may help other students by bringing their experience and perspective to bear in variety of ways.

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U.S. Secretary of Education, Richard W. Riley remarked, at an executive memorandum on international education, that U.S.A. contributed a lot to international education and said that ‘One hundred American institutions of higher learning, for example, educate half of all foreign exchange students. Surely, we can find new ways to encourage many other colleges and universities to become more active in the international arena. I also believe that many more American college students need to see the world with a new set of eyes. And the best way to do that is to study overseas.

“We must create opportunities for students to experience other cultures and other countries within the time and money budgets of the typical community college student.”(Clowdsley, 2001)

In this context, let’s view the Clowdsley’s ideas and experiences which can shed light in this context.

“They say one picture is worth a thousand words, but in reality, one good personal experience is worth more than any number of pictures. We must find ways to get our students abroad in ways that involve them in meaningful interaction with the people of the countries they visit and that lead them to a deeper understanding of the people, languages, and cultures of those countries. We must be sure that those countries do not include only those most like us, but also those with very different cultures and very different standards of living. I remain forever changed by the narrow streets and the students marching for freedom and democracy in China more than 10 years ago. My daughter, the Peace Corps volunteer, is not the same person she was before she taught young people who live in round grass huts with dirt floors and usually no water or electricity. One student who studied Spanish in Costa Rica and lived with a Spanish-speaking family talks of a life-changing experience and recognized it when she began dreaming in Spanish. Another student, one of those who had hardly left Portsmouth, Virginia, realized her own ability to do anything, anywhere, when, after experiences in England and Greece, she found herself helping others find their way around Prague.”(Clowdsley, 2001)

2) Direct and indirect benefits of international universities to the society

The learning environment and our points of view will substantially increase by appreciating different understandings, and by tolerating and respecting students from very different cultures. Every international student comes with different and beautiful values of his/her own culture, and new ideas and experiences may be shared by the others.

A final example of how values and behaviors across cultures can differ concerns the value associated with avoiding conflict and maintaining harmony among people. While some Americans value direct confrontation to solve conflicts, people from Asian countries generally value avoiding confrontations. They have developed subtle, indirect ways to resolve conflict. For example, if a person in Japanese society is upset with someone, he or she will likely not confront the other person directly but will behave in a particular way such as being unusually silent or ignoring the person, providing the other person with clues that there is a problem. Likewise, Laotians and Thais will avoid direct confrontation by being indirect. For example if a Thai woman is angry at her friend, she will be indirect, perhaps by talking with another friend about the problem within earshot of the offending friend. Or she might invite everyone except the offending friend to eat lunch with her. For some Americans, especially black males, being indirect would seem dishonest and insincere. Distrust can result. For many Asians, blatant, blunt, direct confrontation would disrupt the highly valued harmony among people. Gebhard (1996. 115).

We can be aware that social responsiveness as the contribution that international universities make social, cultural and economic development in its regional and global context. It is good if we

manage to involve freshen in discussions on such topics during the orientation course. This will spare both students and teachers' nerves.

3- Foreign Languages at International Universities

It is obvious how important language learning is. The significance of languages can show itself in the proverbs in almost every nation. Some of them are: "How many languages you speak that many persons you are".(Georgian proverb). Another proverb is Turkish: "One who speaks one language is one person, One who speaks two languages is two persons". A Kirgiz proverb is more interesting: People who speak languages can hug each other, People who do not speak languages stab each other".

Kramersch emphasizes the importance of language as follows:

"Learning another language for communication means leaving behind the naive paradise of native-tongue socialization. As they become more and more proficient in a second language and familiar with a second culture, language learners try to articulate their new experience within their old one, making it relevant to their own lives, one day their way, one day that way, creating their own popular culture." . (Kramersch, 1993 – 238)

"Learning a foreign language offers the opportunity for personal meanings, pleasures, and power. From the clash between the familiar meanings of the native culture and the unexpected meanings of the target culture, meanings that were taken for granted are suddenly questioned, challenged, promlematized". (Kramersch ,1993 – 238)

" The role of language is central to Vgotsky's theory, and it plays at least three different roles in development. First, through social interaction, language gives learners access to knowledge others already have. Second, language provides learners with cognitive tools that allow them to think about the world and solve problems. For example, Limok learned *iblik*, he didn't just learn the word and how to pronounce it; He also learned that it is snow that is soft, fresh, crystal free ,and something that increases the likelihood of a successful hunt. Encouraging children to talk about their experiences promotes both learning and development (Egen&kauchak, 2004, p.57, from Pine & Messer, 2000). Third, language serves an individual function; it gives us a means for regulating and reflecting on our own thinking" (Egen & kauchak, 2004, p.57, from J. Byrnes, 2001)

B) CULTURAL AWARENESS

1) Being aware of multiculturalism.

When you study and encounter other cultures you become aware of your own culture better and respect it more, and on the other hand you may learn new things in the target culture.

Hudson (1980:73) defines culture as" a term that refers to some property of a community, especially those which might distinguish it from other communities. Comparing and contrasting things are always beneficial in the process of learning. As understood from the definition, cultural values can be compared and contrasted in a natural way that language learners find interesting and stimulating".

During campus life, class relationships or elsewhere in that foreign country students face and witness some very good and very bad behaviors compared to his/her own culture. Good behaviors may be taken into consideration and appreciated immediately but bad behaviors (that means unacceptable ones) can not be tolerated at first, like generally addressing the elder people by their first names in some European countries. Later, time will help us tolerate and respect them as some of our habits of our culture to them can be respected by the other students from different nations. So in the beginning, it may be difficult to get used to living in the host culture, and people may have some difficulties of harmony in different ways. In this sense Gebhard explains the problem as follows: " we are excited about the prospect of a new way of life. We are delighted about discovering obvious differences: the shape of buildings, the products in stores, and the way

people dress. However, as we find places to live begin our jobs and use the transportation system, we begin to actually feel the impact of the culture on our lives. We discover that we have to think about, even prepare for, the simplest daily activities, such as paying bills, buying food, doing laundry, taking a bus, and using a telephone. These days-to day activities soon weigh on us, resulting in culture shock. As Wallender, a Peace Corp volunteer puts it: “in a very real sense, all the convenient cultural cushions we have become accustomed to having around are in one moment totally dislodged. You are left flat on your back with only that within you for support.” Gebhard (1996- 116)

2) Important issues on multiculturalism

As our world is becoming increasingly diverse in culture, we have never had a better opportunity to learn to live respectfully together and benefit from one another’s wisdom and experiences. But sometimes fear, uncertainty, or discomfort prevents people from talking to each other. This is especially true when it comes to the topic of race, cultural differences, language, and bilingualism. In multicultural classes there is not only one type of students from the same cultural background but several. Therefore students feel that they are representatives of the society and culture in which they were brought up and which they belong to. Without much push and motivation they do their best to reflect good features of their own cultural values. In culturally diverse classes multiculturalism serves as a great opportunity for the learners to teach their classmates about their culture as “cultural ambassadors“. So that the class becomes a world culture learning experience with emphasis on comparing cultures. Students are very much interested in such an exchange. In the light of the above-mentioned situation, learning atmosphere is established very well and positively with the students so eager to share their values with the rest of the classmates.

Multicultural issues play a very significant role at international universities by helping students understand different ways of lives, different reflections of values, and different levels of understanding through which they will better understand other people who have different cultural backgrounds.

By introducing multicultural activities into teaching plans lecturers enhance learners’ motivation, interest, and enthusiasm to learn.

The integration of the students with the rest of the world will be achieved more easily since they will have a broader view of the world through multicultural activities.

C) MISSIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITIES

I have read many missions of different international universities, most of them include the expected academic and educational definition but unfortunately only very few of them contain pedagogical, psychological, social and cultural values. Here are some examples:

Fletcher school, opened in Boston 1933 with the collaboration of Harvard University, has been serving American students and mostly international students from more than 40 countries. It formulates its mission as follows:

- ! To educate professionals from around the world and to prepare them for positions of leadership and influence in the national and international arenas;
 - ! To increase understanding of international problems and concerns through teaching, research, and publications;
 - ! To serve local, national, and international communities in their search to develop relationships of mutual benefit, security, and justice in an increasingly interdependent world.
- ! Another example is Geneva international university

- ! The International University in Geneva is an independent institution which strives to provide the highest quality education for student success in business and related careers. They are dedicated to develop business leaders capable of making decisions in a global environment, and who are committed to serving society, companies and organizations.

To provide an education in Business Administration, International Relations, and Media and Communication with a global outlook.

- ! To foster a balanced program of academic excellence and practical business orientation through effective teaching and learning processes, personalized student services, and a faculty that is devoted to achieving excellence in teaching.
- ! To provide a unique and dynamic learning environment that develops analytical skills that serves the needs of the professional world.
- ! To promote an open multicultural learning environment where the value of diversity is experienced among its international student body and faculty.
- ! To be responsive to the changing needs in management development through an outcome-based curriculum and in close cooperation with the international business community.

I think that the following ideas that are related to social, psychological, pedagogical and cultural issues, which we include in IBSU's mission, will be absolutely necessary and crucial for the international universities in the global world:

- ! To promote world cultural values, orientation towards the ideals of democracy and humanism essential for the existence and development of civil society.
- ! To strengthen relations of Georgia with other countries by teaching the new generation about the importance of cooperation
- ! To promote the vast understanding of tolerance, friendship and hospitality of both Georgian and Turkish cultures.
- ! To create an environment based on mutual dialogue and respect so that they can learn the art of living together irrespective of race, ethnicity and cultures.

D) PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES

A professor's role is to get students to be responsible for their own learning and to be free thinkers. In that sense, lecturers' homogenous attitude is expected as he/she has students from different nations and cultures.

In the multicultural classes Lecturers are supposed to create a friendly atmosphere and care about everybody's psychology. In order to do that as Gay (1997) mentions culturally responsive teaching, instruction that acknowledges and accommodates multiculturalism in classrooms. And he advises the following goals: 1- Accepting and valuing differences, 2-Accommodating different cultural interaction patterns, 3- Building on students' cultural backgrounds. Here I mainly concentrate on accepting and valuing differences because it bases on pedagogy, and helps us understand the students' psychologies in the framework of multiculturalism. In order not to have any kind of conflict in the classrooms of international universities we should listen to Kauchak and Eggen carefully:" Genuine caring is an essential element in this process. Teachers can communicate caring in several ways, including the following:

- ! By devoting time to students – for example, being available before and after school to help with schoolwork and discuss students' personal concerns.
- ! By demonstrating interest in students' lives – for example, asking about Jewish Holidays, Muslim holy days, and festivals like Kwanzaa.
- ! By involving all students in learning activities- for example, calling on all students as equally as possible."(Kauchak & Eggen ,2005,p.89-90)

With the tolerance and peace, and with this kind of suggestions, we can easily create a friendly milieu and welcome all international students. And we can learn a lot from each other.

E) CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion this article stresses the importance of contributions that international universities contribute to the higher education, and awareness of multicultural, social, psychological and pedagogical issues.

The following recommendations can be classified as academic and educational aspects, and socio-cultural and pedagogical aspects

In terms of academic and educational factors, Lecturers should have the following qualities, and should discuss the issues that they need for better education:

- ! High level of academic research
- ! Contemporary information
- ! Academicians who read articles lately issued in international Journals.
- ! Digesting the information and presenting it to the students in a way that they can easily get according to their needs.

We all know that qualified academicians who are characterized by the above mentioned criteria are one of the musts for a prestigious international university. Another must is having a clear definition of socio-cultural and pedagogical aspect in their mission, and they should put this into action.

In this frame, the following recommendations should be taken into consideration since the classes will consist of multicultural students:

- ! Understanding the individuals very well
- ! Taking over the role of integrating the students from different cultures
- ! Cultural values must be taken into consideration, samples should be offered during the class.
- ! Psychological and pedagogical approach should be differently applied at these universities
- ! Lecturers should help guest students decrease the level of culture shock.
- ! Lecturers should sustain a friendly atmosphere with a professional classroom management by taking the diversities into consideration.
- ! The principle "Our differences are our riches" should be accepted by everyone.

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