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Pedagogical design in the modern cross-cultural educational system

Introduction

We all live in an increasingly cross-cultural world. And it is natural that students' mobility in higher education is growing rapidly. The habitual way of engaging in global educational exchange has been through physical exchanges, such as cultural exchange delegations, semester abroad programs. And their importance can scarcely be overestimated. Nowadays for the Ukrainian students it has become the norm to face the range of problems which were rather extraordinary for the youth of the USSR epoch, such as how to be tolerant and curious of others, how to ask questions, how to listen, how to communicate to be clearly understood, how to promote, safeguard and realize the importance of the EU values within a globally influenced, culturally diverse and technologically advanced world. But it is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore that every foreign student coming to another country brings a variety of cultural influences, values and academic differences. Nevertheless, not every time we think over all the problems of choosing the right educational paradigm and patterns.

Over the years there have been many attempts to address these issues. However, far too little attention has been paid to pedagogical design problems within the framework of the certain educational paradigm. The aim of this paper was to compare educational paradigms in higher education across different cultures in order to clear the choice of the leading principles for pedagogical design to make it easier for students' to adapt to a new study environment. The main questions addressed in the paper are: to differentiate educational paradigms from the cultural point of view and depending on them to compare pedagogical discourse, as well as to highlight the range of pedagogical design questions of understanding how pedagogical solutions and technology could support exchange program students in diverse learning environments. Therefore, all the issues are explored intensively from the perspective of people who deal with those problems on a day-to-day basis.

Literature review

A considerable amount of literature has been published on the problem of cross-cultural education. However, many of the published studies describe the particular or special problems. The studies often fail to consider the differing education cultures, so long as students bring with them a long and different history of schooling of their home country, an experience, patterns of learning and study habits that have been formed in interaction with their cultural and educational environments.

In 2003 Wierstra et al. found that the patterns of learning, including approaches to learning, regulation strategies, conceptions of learning, and learning orientations, may coincide or conflict with the way of learning to be expected at universities abroad (4). In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature on regional approach to pedagogical patterns development. And it is significant for the countries of the post-Soviet space. For instance, we can easily find the marked differences in educational cultures between Western and Eastern parts of Ukraine as perceived by the Ukrainian students from these territories.

All the peculiarities should be considered and reflected in pedagogical design. While a variety of definitions of the term “pedagogical design” have been suggested, this paper will use the definition suggested by A. Romiszowski (1981) who saw it as any systematic choice and use of procedures, methods, prescriptions, and devices in order to bring about effective, efficient, and productive learning (p. 3). Conole’s (2010) study found that the best academic courses and programs result from following a clearly designed process. The scientists consider a key principle of learning design to help in making the design process more explicit and shareable (Conole, 2010, p. 482).

Method of evaluation

A comparative cross-cultural analysis was performed on the basis of students of Kharkiv State Academy of Design and Arts, Ukraine. The research tools involved the following non-participant observations of the classes, interviews with five students from China, two students from Vietnam, five students from Russia, two students from Uzbekistan, as well as teachers from the USA. The non-participant observations provided the researcher with a comprehensive understanding of the context where the activities were being carried out, as well as the background knowledge to identify difficulties which may arise. The students’ interviews showed how much they enjoyed the new learning environment and what is the great problem in the process of adaptation.

Results and discussion

The observations and the researcher’s experience of dealing with international exchange students stress the importance to explore the blind spots within the countries’ culture and higher educational system, i.e. the educational paradigms,

including approaches to learning, value orientations, pedagogical discourse, communicative strategies and patterns, testing strategies etc. Nowadays there are two definitely opposite cultural patterns, individualistic and collectivist ones, which predetermine the choice of pedagogical technology, forms of the academic information presentation, methods of organization of pedagogical mutual relations, and communication.

In Ukrainian pedagogical theory and practice during the last 20 years much more attention has been paid to development and implementation of a person-oriented education paradigm. But pedagogical design cannot be perfect without the knowledge of the values of the student audience, the habitual for them ways of the new academic material presentation and many other aspects which are rooted in the cultural peculiarities. In the paper we consider it necessary to present the results of the comparative analysis in the form of Table 1 to make them obvious.

Tab. 1. Comparative analysis of individualistic and collectivist cultural patterns

	Individualistic cultural pattern (the USA, the UK)	Collectivist cultural pattern (China, Russia, Uzbekistan, Greece, Vietnam)
Educational paradigm	A learner-centered educational paradigm with orientation on the best student	A teacher-centered educational paradigm with orientation on an ordinary skill level student
Teaching values (should be consistent, universal and transcultural)	Respect for a personal and human dignity; equality, freedom (freedom of choice and responsibility for it), creativity, individuality in self-expression	Usefulness for the powerful country, normativity (compliance with the established state standards), manageability (obedience), discipline, sameness
The main pedagogical strategy	Strategy of support and respect to each student	Strategy of active one-sided influence of a teacher into every student
The goals of the pedagogical approaches within the educational paradigm is to enable students	To develop both an understanding of scientific concepts and necessary critical skills in order to be able to express their own opinion or views: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • broaden their perspectives, to motivate reflection on their process • criticism and feedback 	To develop an understanding of the definite scientific concepts in order to be able to simulate the use of the obtained knowledge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make their knowledge extensive and profound • retranslation of the learnt information
Pedagogical discourse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The communicative type strategy presupposes first the statement as the single, specific claim that your information supports and then some arguments and examples. It is explained by the importance of a personal point of view with no matter what the recipients' opinion is • The discourse dominating idea is to formulate a personal position and opinion with performativity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The communicative type strategy presupposes first the arguments and examples and then a statement. The aim of this strategy is to prevent any disagreement or negative reaction • The discourse dominating idea is to keep up a friendly atmosphere and unity of views

Principals of testing and questioning	To check and measure the reached level of achievements with <i>the main goal</i> both to demonstrate positive experience and cleverness and to make the necessary improvements	To check and measure the reached level of skills and knowledge with <i>(as the main goal)</i> the following accentuating all the failures
The specificity of the use of the Internet information	Presentation of all e-materials in web 2.0 format that allows copying and editing of the content or “copy and paste”	Presentation of all e-materials in PDF (Portable Document Format), “canned” formats or “read only”
Design of learning space (classrooms)	Individual focused rather than group focused	Teacher-centric, that is poorly designed for collaboration and communication

All the mentioned should be taken into consideration at the designed education. For instance, Kharkiv State Academy of Design and Arts in Ukraine is a leading design and art institution of higher education located in Kharkiv, Ukraine, that offers undergraduate and postgraduate studies in Design and Fine Arts and post-master studies in design. The MFA degree programmes in pedagogical design equip students with cultural and pedagogical skills, so that the students can participate in and contribute to the expanding field of contemporary pedagogical design connected with the website design, design of learning environment, and e-books design, pedagogical design of the blended education. The programme relies both on students' lectures attendance and the independent studies, and all the students are provided with their own studio space. The professor-led group form the basis for collective discussions, presentations, lectures which take place in classrooms designed for single to many communicative styles by the teachers and students of the Academy. Additionally, the students may choose to take part in practice-based design research projects run by the Academy. Autonomous studio practice is bolstered by tutorials, critical studies and course electives, as well as excellent workshops including collaboration with schools and real-life problems.

It is essential that according to the cultural staff of the academic audience and the course goals the very classroom interior is changing. So, the tables are put depending on the form of co-operation with the teacher in each class. The updated type of pedagogical interaction organization necessitates the rejection of the usual arrangement of desks in a row. Cooperation of teachers with designers seeks to develop new types of learning space zoning (classes and classrooms), and is not centered on location of work-places in the “Z or L forms”. According to Fielding learning process of the future should be distributed as follows “1/3 of all time devoted to work at a computer, 1/3 – to the academic communication, 1/3 – to independent work”. Also Bigler offers a “studio model” of studio zoning (2) that provides dynamic changes in the forms and methods of implementation of the learner-centered educational paradigm. The timeliness of such projects is proved by the great demand, for example, a number of international design contests that took place annually (2000–2014) in Italy and Poland, the students of Kharkiv State

Academy of Design and Fine Arts are constantly receiving Grand Prizes for the design project of classrooms and auditoriums under the theme “Education in the future”.

Conclusions

Although the experience of studying abroad may be enriching in many respects, adaptation to a new study environment is not always easy. Teaching and learning spaces must be changed to reflect the educational paradigm shift we are seeing in the XXI century between learners and educator. And it is pedagogical design considering cultural educational peculiarities of the students that can create some highly intensive and efficient measures to solve the existing problems in the world educational system. Pedagogical design is surely faultless without the knowledge of the values of the student audience, the main pedagogical strategy, pedagogical discourse, communicative strategies, principals of testing and questioning, the specificity of the use of the Internet information, design of learning space (classrooms). Pedagogical design based on the principles considering cultural educational paradigm peculiarities can also create some highly intensive and efficient measures both to solve the EU educational system problems and to speed up the integration of Ukrainian higher education into European “knowledge society”. This research has thrown up many questions in need for further investigation.

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Abstract

The aim of this paper was to compare educational paradigms in higher education across different cultures in order to clear the choice of the leading principles for pedagogical design to make easier students' adaptation to a new study environment. The main questions addressed in the paper are: to differentiate educational paradigms from the cultural point of view and depending on them to compare pedagogical discourse, and to highlight the range of pedagogical design questions of understanding how pedagogical solutions and technology could support exchange program students in diverse learning environments. Therefore, all the issues are explored intensively from the perspective of the people who deal with those

problems on a day-to-day basis. Although the experience of studying abroad may be enriching in many respects, adaptation to a new study environment is not always easy. Pedagogical design cannot be perfect without the knowledge of the values of the student audience, the habitual way of the new academic material presentation, and many other aspects which are rooted in the cultural peculiarities.

Key words: educational paradigms, learning environment, pedagogical design, cultural peculiarities

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