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Importance of and need for intercultural education according to students: future teachers

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The aim of this article was to address the subject of intercultural education understood as a problem, which, in the process of educating students who will become teachers, should be taken into consideration in such a scope to make sure that the future teachers can support their pupils in the formation of desired attitudes and behaviours in their relations with individuals of different cultural, national and ethnic backgrounds. The first section deals with the importance of intercultural education in the context of the meaning of the following terms: multiculturalism, culture and education. It refers to selected scopes and interpretation of interculturalism and intercultural education. Within such a framework, the problem of the importance of and the need for intercultural education is discussed based on the opinions of pedagogy students and according to the results of the author's own surveys conducted at the University of Opole (UO) and the Slovakia-based University of Žilina (UŽ) during the academic year of 2016–2017.

KEYWORDS:

intercultural education, multiculturalism, interculturalism, students – future teachers, surveys.

Introduction

Currently, schools are increasingly challenged with tasks resulting from the needs of the ever-changing reality. This is due to the fact that diversified multicultural social environments determine a number of phenomena affecting interpersonal relations

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and contributing to the emergence of cultural, racial and ethnic conflicts. Culture and education may set the direction for learning and understanding one another and for creating principles of coexistence based on tolerance and respect for one's fellow man. Educating our young generation and preparing them for life in a culturally diversified society entail the need for equipping teachers with appropriate skills. At the turn of the 20th and 21st century, it became necessary to expand the scope of the academic training of teachers to make them prepared for new educational challenges. As far as the nature of the problem is concerned, this article is connected with intercultural education understood as a subject of university teacher training curriculum. Collected results and observations derived from the surveys have been presented with reference to the theoretical definitions of multiculturalism and interculturalism, as these formed the basis, from which the concept of intercultural education has emerged.

Intercultural education in the context of the meaning of the following terms: multiculturalism, culture and education

Currently, diversity and multiculturalism gain a global meaning as a result of possibilities created by political relations, economic conditions and, to a great extent, democratisation of political systems in many countries, all of which contribute to the migration of people from their homeland to less familiar or completely strange places. The global extent of multiculturalism is also connected with the phenomenon of immigration caused by ethnic conflicts and other threats or social problems. Intercultural education, as presented in this article, is related to the problem of multiculturalism and interculturalism. Multiculturalism is believed to be both a social and a cultural phenomenon, and it affects the process of emergence of new models of coexistence and behaviour of people in Europe as well as other parts of the world. Multiculturalism is interpreted as the presence of "two or more groups characterised by relatively different cultural (sometimes also racial) distinctive features (...)" (Golka, 2012, pp. 270–272), within one local area, region, country or within one community. According to Marian Golka, one's appearance, language, religion and system of values are what sets minorities apart from representatives of the majority, among which they decided to settle; these qualities, perceived as distinctness, may evoke various emotions or undesired reactions (2012). For a conflict-free coexistence in a shared area to be possible, it is vital for the autochthons and other minorities to learn about and accept the newcomers arriving from different ethnic backgrounds. Nikitorowicz (2007, p. 244) enumerated internal pluralism, mutual awareness of positive perception of other cultures and respect for "one's indigenous values" as the qualities of multiculturalism. Furthermore, Nikitorowicz complemented this category with the activity factor and pointed to the possibility of

“mutual infiltration, personal contacts, dynamics of coexistence and interaction as well as permanent relations among particular groups” (2009, p. 519). Sadowski (1999, p. 33) claimed that multiculturalism requires a policy to be implemented by the national or local government and that relations between cultures should be regulated institutionally according to the rules of democracy. According to this researcher, multiculturalism should be understood as institutionalised, according to the rules of democracy, coexistence, within one country, of individuals and communities and other collective forms characterised by socially formulated cultural identity. As far as interpersonal relations in a multicultural environment are concerned, it becomes important to share agreements and have similar understanding of meanings assigned to values. Huntington (1998, pp. 491–492), when identifying common qualities of a civilisation, stated that “safety of the world requires acknowledgement of multiculturalism on a global scale”; he also emphasised the importance of morality as a value and while making it absolute, he accepted truth and justice as the moral minimum for all societies stemming from a community in an environment of cultures. The above-mentioned thesis was put forward based on the interpretation of the notion of culture in a civilised world as proposed by Walzer (1994, pp. 1–11) and Wilson (1993, p. 225). Life of individuals from a different ethnic background in a majority community is burdened with numerous problems, such as respecting their rights, practising their religion and cultivating their traditions; there is also a dilemma between keeping one’s identity and culture and considering the need for blending into the cultural surrounding of the previously foreign society (Nikitorowicz, 2009, p. 99). In a multicultural environment, mutual interpersonal contacts, building relations, communication, learning about one another and reaching agreements all take place predominantly on the cultural plane. The definition of the notion of culture differs contextually. Szczepański (1970, pp. 73–74), while referring to the notion of culture as formulated on the basis of philosophy of history, defined it as a set of man-created values. In the broadest sense, formulated on the basis of sociology and cultural anthropology, Szczepański interpreted culture as everything which was not spontaneously created by nature but through the activity of men and intentional reflection, as a result of man’s work (1970). In its functional sense, the notion of culture was interpreted by Gajda (2002, pp. 94–99; 2006, p. 21), who attributed to culture, among other things, an interpersonal function related to the popularisation of culture by individuals through direct contacts and interactions and to the role of mass media with their significance presented in the context of the ongoing cultural refinement of the mankind and the humanisation of the world, which, in turn, contribute to reaching agreement among people from different cultural milieux. Nowadays, civilisation development and changes, as well as the number of other factors, shape multiculturalism as a global phenomenon and process. Cultural diversity of national, ethnic and other groups sets a multicultural tone to societies. A multicult-

tural society refers to social structures composed of individuals and groups belonging to two or more cultural milieux, which are different from the indigenous, majority group living in a given territory with its distinctive features and cultural identity, with all those groups maintaining mutual social relations resulting from state-imposed arrangements as well as legal and regulatory conditions determining the principles for coexistence and organisation of life (Wereszczyńska, 2010, p. 103). As defined by Nikitorowicz, “[a] multicultural society tends to shift from its reaction to distinctness to interaction, i.e. to intentional exploration, understanding, cooperation, collaboration, negotiation and dialogue and by the same token creates interculturalism” (2009, p. 58). Such a society can create an environment which is conducive to coexistence of both minority and majority groups, but it may also face problems and conflicts. Interculturalism should allow reaching agreements in social relations and actions, taking into account the mitigation of conflicts in a multicultural society, and thus it should be considered a particularly vital educational task (2009).

Interculturalism and intercultural competence

The category of interculturalism is examined from various perspectives. To define and describe its importance, it is deemed to be necessary to accept, as an empirical fact, the existence of a multicultural society with its structure encompassing groups which differ in terms of their culture, ethnicity and religion. Burszta (2008, p. 20) pointed to this factor as the first level, on which one can engage into discussions on interculturalism. According to Burszta (2008, p. 21), interculturalism may be characterised by the existence of multiple social norms and their approval as well as the existence of relevant regulations. The third condition for the existence of interculturalism pointed out by Burszta is the interpretation of multiculturalism as an “ideology of multiculturalism” with its accepted objective to promote approval for and appreciation of “multiple forms of life” achieved with the assistance of opinion-forming milieux; in this respect, Burszta also included education preparing for a cross-cultural dialogue (2008). Considering the above-mentioned definition of multiculturalism, interculturalism creates an opportunity for reaching agreements and communicating through a dialogue, for acceptance of plurality of values and understanding among the participants in social life. While interpreting interculturalism as a task, Korporowicz (1997, p. 70) emphasised the possibility of movement towards acculturation, meeting of individuals and groups from different cultural backgrounds and representing different standards and values, which limits the formation of simplistic opinions about one another. While discussing the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication, Korporowicz highlighted, as necessary, auto-transformational actions oriented towards changes and development; he

also saw the need for developing such intercultural competence, which would contribute to the dynamics of cultural interactions (1997). The above-mentioned opinion assumes that cross-cultural communication denotes the ability to communicate between individuals from different cultures, with its applicability to group and individual relations and interactions. It helps overcome differences resulting from the distinctness of cultures, systems of values or religions (Paleczny, 2007, pp. 220–221; Mikułowski Pomorski, 2007, pp. 74–75). However, intercultural competence is related to the ability to become familiar with a multicultural environment and the ability to adjust one's behaviour to the conditions applicable to contacts with individuals of different origins in terms of their nationality, culture or religion (Grzybowski, 2008, pp. 38–39). Intercultural competence also includes the skills facilitating effective functioning in a culturally diversified world, communicating as well as creating space and conditions for the intermingling of individuals and cultures and organising life in such a manner as to ensure harmonious coexistence (Dąbrowa & Markowska-Manista, 2013, pp. 234–244). Intercultural competence facilitates more comprehensive understanding of individuals of different cultural origins, communicating with such individuals, shaping mutual relations on a satisfactory level and taking effective actions (Nowicka, 2018). There is also a moral aspect to intercultural competence pertaining to the recognition of "outgroup members as members of a group representing different cultures and ways of life", the notion also embraces promotion of morality in terms of ethical interpretation of legal regulations applicable to individuals of different nationality, ethnicity or denomination (Dąbrowa & Markowska-Manista, 2013, p. 244). For the purpose of effective creation and execution of open forms of communication, requiring dynamics in terms of cultural interactions and relevant intercultural competence, sociologist Dominique Bouchet formulated the principles which may be helpful due to both theoretical and practical approach to the problem of formulation of intercultural competence. While enumerating the said principle, Bouchet pointed to the following:

1. No one is a "typical" member of his/her culture.
2. No culture exists in a "closed" and "homogeneous" form.
3. No one is a member of only one "isolated" group and our identity is determined in relation to members of other groups.
4. Each culture is a form of "transmission" of its values and patterns, which may be subject to excessive transformations, and thus it may be, to a various degree, "processual" in its nature.
5. No one "receives" his/her identity in a finished and unchanged form (Bouchet, 1995, qtd. in: Korporowicz, 1997, pp. 70–71).

The above-mentioned principles applicable to the formulation of intercultural competence were complemented by Bouchet with a relevant approach described from the epistemological perspective:

- Learning a foreign culture is, in fact, always a “two-way” process, with both groups affecting each other.
- Communication between cultures contributes to changes within them, and it is a sort of “exchange” – readiness for responding to the presence of other forms of life.
- Each form of exploring different cultures is also an opportunity to “explore one’s own” culture (1997, p. 71).

The principles enumerated by Bouchet, describing the position of a man in a culture, as well as their particularisation by defining the cognitive approach, refer to the philosophical concept of a man as both the creator of culture and its participant (Grzybowski, 2008, p. 31). Interculturalism perceived as a task aiming at creating ways of conflict-free coexistence of individuals and groups in a multicultural society calls for becoming open to one’s cultural reality and for manifesting openness to other cultural realities (Dauber, 2001, pp. 147–148). Intercultural education supports efforts aiming at undertaking joint actions under a defined idea.

Intercultural education

The need for intercultural education is justified by the challenges of today’s world combined with the lack of tolerance and understanding for the situation of an out-group member, a human being who differs from the majority of the society, homogeneous in terms of its nationality, in his/her origin, race and other traits. Emerging conflicts, indifference, intolerance, aggression and rejection may be counteracted with education, culture and acceptance of cultural pluralism. The following interpretation of the notion of education, being the most exhaustive and comprehensive, has been accepted as the basis for the discussion on intercultural education: “(...) the totality of factors affecting individuals and groups of individuals, which are conducive to such development and such use of their potential, as to make them, to the maximum extent possible, aware and creative members of their social, national, cultural and global community and to make them capable of active self-fulfilment, achieve unique and permanent identity and autonomy, so that they are capable of developing their own SELF through undertaking «over-personal tasks», through the maintenance of continuity of one’s own SELF in the course of completion of «distant tasks». Education then refers to the totality of activities related to leading another individual and his/her own activity in realising his/her full potential as well as the totality of affecting factors and functions formulating and regulating one’s personality and behaviour in relation to other people and to the world” (Kwieciński, 1995, pp. 13–14). UNESCO sees education and culture as a chance for world peace and the objective of activities oriented towards this goal is to “support changes introduced by ourselves and within ourselves – in

terms of the way we act, behave and in terms of our approach to the Outgroup Member"; the achievement of this objective is also connected with the dynamics of actions in the intercultural area (Mayor, 2001, p. 476). The above-mentioned idea may be internalised in the reality of a multicultural society through intercultural education, as it is characterised by transculturality present in learning processes (Nikitorowicz, 1999, p. 25). Intercultural education is described as "any processes of formal and informal education affecting the formation of principles of and attitudes towards open interactions among representatives of various cultures and, consequently, learning to solve conflicts through a dialogue and making peaceful coexistence a reality." (Nikitorowicz, 2009, p. 502). When discussing the importance of intercultural education, Lewowicki (2000, pp. 32–33) pointed to the possibility of considering the concept on the level of educational practice describing, through "humanistic experience", the meaning of dialogue as a basis for reaching an agreement in conflict situations, opposing violence and marginalisation. As far as the intentions of the educational policy of the European Union are concerned, intercultural education is perceived as a chance for bringing nations together. Furthermore, cross-cultural dialogue is identified as a basic factor in communication as well as interpersonal and international contacts. The following objectives have been adopted for intercultural education:

- Teaching to "critically analyse the reality, distance oneself from the commonplace opinions functioning in the dominant culture, respect other cultures and analyse various legal aspects"
- Educating that "our view of the reality is subjective, distorted by our cultural identity and that each culture is, in a sense, indebted to other cultures"
- Striving for "establishing and developing a dialogue without identifying oneself with the dominant culture and without reinforcing different cultural identities" (Rabczuk, 2007, pp. 96–97).

The set of principles proposed by Nikitorowicz might be considered guidance for the selection of content and tasks deemed important for the process of intercultural education from the perspective of educational and didactic work. In those principles, Nikitorowicz pointed out that:

- Intercultural education is a consequence of "monoculturalism and multiculturalism", assuming that their "presence is necessary" for the emergence of the "need of being 'in between', on the verge of two or more cultures" resulting also from the existence of minorities in countries characterised by a multinational structure – minorities with multiple homelands and with no homeland. Intercultural education consists in educational measures aiming at reducing hermetic behaviours on the part of minorities resulting from their adherence to the norms typical of their own culture and spurred by prejudice, concerns, myths or the sense of insecurity which may come from the elements of culture of the national majority.

- Education refers to values which are formulated in various cultures, which are heavily diversified, they can be utilised by representatives of various communities and mutual communication among members belonging to more than one group is reflected in the shaping of identity while also allows the exchange of knowledge of one another. With reference to the same, the author also attempted to interpret the world of cultures in terms of their vast number and diversity, while omitting those factors, which contribute to describing culture in terms of classification, gradation, i.e. as ranked higher or lower. In a similar fashion, the author refers to the “in-group” and “out-group” categories defining them contextually and not in a classifying manner.
- Cultures exist on equal rights and “are subject to transformations” in a processual manner in the course of exchange of values and patterns. The author adds that each form enabling learning about other people and applied from one’s own cultural perspective is an element of development, whereas intercultural education allows an individual to learn more about his/her own cultural individuality, create his/her own image and thus it may be useful with reference to others.
- Intercultural education should allow for the democratisation and globalisation as evolutionary and interrelated processes. Furthermore, this type of education should aim at creating civic identity and emphasising, within this identity, mutual acceptance and cooperation (Nikitorowicz, 2009, pp. 289–291).

Within the framework set by the above-mentioned principles, the author pointed to the need of expanding the scope of intercultural education to include intercivili-sational education, which is justified with the recent emergence in Poland of such national minorities as Vietnamese, the Chinese, Arabs, Africans and others. For the same reason, it becomes necessary to allow for the cultural context and therefore to apply relevant education methods, one of which, as suggested by the author, should be an educational chain consisting of the following: “recognition of distinctness, learning processes, understanding, cooperation, mutual experience, interaction, etc.” and others (2009, p. 291).

The presented set of recommendations identifies areas of significance and actions in terms of intercultural education, which are important for the preparation of an individual for coexistence in a culturally diversified society and recognition of both cultures, that of the minority and that of the majority, on equal rights.

The need for and the importance of intercultural education according to female students, future teachers: results of the author’s own surveys

In terms of developing theoretical concepts for intercultural education, assigning its meanings and defining its objectives and practical educational activities, this subdiscipline is supported by pedagogy, psychology, sociology, cultural studies, anthropol-

ogy, political science, law and other disciplines. The interdisciplinary scope of this discipline incorporated into curriculums applicable to children and young people requires teachers to receive appropriate pedagogical training and to use educational and teaching methods relevant for the needs of a given multicultural environment: a preschool, a school, a classroom and an extracurricular environment. In the course of their education, teachers to be gain particular knowledge, participate in their teacher training at schools and, as one could expect, read subject books and meet with individuals of various origins and communicate with them in their daily lives. Nevertheless, taking into account numerous problems encountered in our social reality and related to intolerance, conflicts, insensitivity to the needs of Outgroup Members, inability to establish relations and engage in interactions with individuals and groups of different cultural origins, the following question arises: how do we prepare future teachers for intercultural education and working with children and young people in a culturally diversified society? To investigate the opinions of students regarding the need for and the importance of intercultural education, a survey-based opinion poll was held under the study conducted by the author of this article. The survey included 58 pedagogy students of the Institute of Educational Studies of the University of Opole (UO), with their major in early school education and preschool education, and 36 pedagogy students from the Department of Pedagogical Studies of the University of Žilina (UŽ) in the Slovak Republic in the academic year of 2016/2017. The survey used in the study was completed by a total of 94 female students. In the section devoted to discussing the results of the survey, the names of the universities have been abbreviated: UO denoting University of Opole and UŽ denoting University of Žilina. Furthermore, the author already investigated this research problem in the period between 2010 and 2014. The first detailed problem addressed in the survey pertained to the identification of the knowledge of female students of the UO of attitudes and behaviour of Poles towards people of different nationalities and minorities. The female students of the UŽ were asked about the perception of the same problem among Slovaks. The collected data are summarised in Table 1. The answers were provided based on a 1–5 scale assigned to each detailed statement. The data obtained from 72.5% of the answers provided by female students of the UO and 77.8% of the answers provided by female students of the UŽ confirms that both Poles and Slovaks are open to meeting people of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds. UO (85.8%) and UŽ female students (77.7%) agree that their fellow countrymen are not yet fully capable of respecting different religious beliefs held by people of different nationalities or from an ethnic minority. Similar results were obtained in a survey conducted among early school pedagogy students of the UO in the academic year of 2013/2014 (Wereszczyńska, 2017, pp. 160–161). According to 43.1% of the female students from the UO, Poles are ready to treat Outgroup Members equally and without prejudice considering their cultural needs

and their tradition. 55.2% of the respondents in this group replied negatively to this statement. The majority, as many as 77.7%, of the UŽ female students replied positively to the statement regarding the above-mentioned readiness of their fellow countrymen. Respondents from both UO, 88.0%, and UŽ, 74.9%, believe that representatives of their respective nations are open to economic and social collaboration with national and ethnic minorities. According to the majority of both groups of surveyed female students, Poles and Slovaks are positive in their perception and assessment of the importance of foreign investments and foreign capital in the economies of their countries – this was confirmed by 91.3% of UO female students and 86.1% of UŽ female students. As far as the problem of foreign competition on the employment market is concerned, which could result in limited employment opportunities for Poles, 58.6% of UO female students replied in the affirmative. The same concern for the Slovakian employment market was shared by 83.3% of respondents from UŽ. According to 63.8% of the female students from the UO, Poles keep their distance in their interpersonal relations with representatives of other nationalities and ethnic minorities. When asked the same question, 58.3% of the Slovakian female students replied in the affirmative. A positive reply to the statement which reads “Outgroup Members should adopt local behaviour models and standards as their own and quickly blend into the Polish/Slovak society” was given by 48.2% of the respondents from UO and 69.4% of the respondents from UŽ. 57.0% of the respondents from the UO and 75.0% of the female students from the Slovakian university denied that their fellow countrymen avoid relations with representatives of other cultures or nations due to their lack of required communication skills. The problem of their fellow countrymen being suspicious about and showing negative emotions towards representatives of different nationalities was not confirmed in their replies given by 44.6% of UO female students and 19.5% of the respondents from UŽ. It should be noted that in this group, 41.7% of the respondents did not have any opinion on this issue.

Table 1. Attitudes and behaviour of Poles and Slovaks towards people of different nationalities and cultural origins according to Polish and Slovakian female students

No.	Statements	Answers provided by Polish students (N=58); data in%					Answers provided by Slovakian students (N=36); data in%					
		5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	
	Poles/Slovaks											
1.	They are open to meet people of different nationalities and cultures	31.0	41.5	12.0	8.6	6.9	27.8	50.0	5.6	8.3	8.3	
2.	They do not, yet, fully respect different believes held by other nationalities or ethnic minorities	29.3	56.5	7.3	5.2	1.7	33.3	44.4	13.9	5.6	2.8	

3.	They are willing to treat "out-group members" equally, and without prejudice, in terms of their cultural needs and traditions	8.6	34.5	1.7	51.7	3.5	22.2	55.5	13.9	5.6	2.8
4.	They are open to economic and social collaboration with national and ethnic minorities	34.5	53.5	5.0	3.5	3.5	13.9	61.0	13.9	5.6	5.6
5.	They are positive in terms of their perception and assessment of the importance of foreign investments and foreign capital activities from the perspective of the economy of their country	53.4	39.7	1.7	5.2	–	58.3	27.8	5.6	8.3	–
6.	They are increasingly concerned with foreigners perceived as a threat to the employment market in their country and to their native culture	32.8	25.8	8.6	19.0	13.8	52.8	30.5	5.6	8.3	2.8
7.	They keep their distance in their interpersonal relations with representatives of other nationalities and ethnic minorities	20.7	43.1	5.2	17.2	13.8	22.2	36.1	16.7	11.1	13.9
8.	They expect "out-group members" to adopt local behaviour models and standards as their own and quickly blend into the Polish/Slovak society	17.2	31.0	32.8	13.8	5.2	22.2	47.2	13.9	5.6	11.1
9.	They avoid situations, where their partner in a relation is a representative of a different culture or a different nation due to the lack of communication skills	8.6	17.2	17.2	51.8	5.2	11.1	5.6	8.3	52.8	22.2
10.	They are suspicious about and sometimes show negative emotions towards "out-group members"	10.7	15.7	29.0	24.1	20.5	8.3	30.5	41.7	13.9	5.6

Source: Prepared by the author

Based on the analysis of the above-mentioned data, the conclusion is that we still need to implement actions aiming at mitigating negative attitudes and behaviours as well as prejudice towards national, ethnic and cultural minorities – this could and should be reflected in intercultural education.

An attempt to define intercultural education was another research problem addressed in the survey handed to the respondents. Based on the data extracted from the replies given, a set of qualities was determined, which the female students thought characterised this type of education. Furthermore, these qualities were combined to create a catalogue of meanings assigned to intercultural education – the data are summarised in Table 2. In their answers, the students indicated more than one qualities of intercultural education; for this reason, the percentage values found in the table, when calculated as numerical values and added up, exceed 100%. Both in the group of the respondents from the UO and the UŽ, the most commonly indicated qualities defining tasks to be carried out under intercultural education included the following: promotion of attitude characterised by tolerance and respect for people of different origins as well as teaching foreign languages, history and culture of other nations. In

both groups, the need for offering education to people of different nationalities was ranked as the least important task of intercultural education.

Table 2. Definitions describing intercultural education as formulated by the female students of the UO and the UŽ

No.	Definitions of intercultural education	Female students from UO (N=58); data in%	Female students from UŽ (N=36); data in%
1.	Education in terms of tolerance and respect for people of different origins	74.1	83.3
2.	Teaching foreign languages, history and culture of other nations	32.8	58.3
3.	Education oriented towards peaceful coexistence and communication with representatives of other nationalities, through a dialogue as well as empathy with Ou-tgroup Members	31.0	22.2
4.	Preparation for work in culturally diversified environments	24.1	25.0
5.	Education provided for people of different nationalities	8.6	19.4
6.	No answer provided	15.5	22.2

Source: Prepared by the author. Abbreviations: UO, University of Opole; UŽ, University of Žilina

When asked if there is a need for including in the university curriculum a separate series of classes devoted to intercultural education, the respondents provided the following answers:

- 74.9% (UO) and 80.6% (UŽ) believed that the problem of intercultural education should be included in the curriculum of pedagogical studies, which prepare students for the profession of a teacher.
- 10.3% (UO) and 5.6% (UŽ) saw no reason for the inclusion of intercultural education in the university curriculum.
- 14.8% (UO) and 13.8% (UŽ) did not provide any answer.

The majority of respondents from the UO and the UŽ believe that intercultural education should be included in the curriculum of pedagogical studies.

When discussing the problem of interculturalism and intercultural education, particular stress is put on those values, which are crucial for developing one's identity and forming attitudes and behaviours towards other people, which are free from prejudice regardless of one's nationality or ethnic background. Ten categories of values were enumerated in the set presented in the question addressed to the female students. In their answers, the students could point to more than one values and rank them in terms of their importance. The empirical data are summarised in Table 3. According to the students from UO, the most important values for preparing the youth for life in a multicultural society are as follows: dignity of a human being, freedom, kindness, tolerance, human identity and well-being.

Table 3. Values indicated by the respondents

No.	Values	Female students from UO (N=58)		Female students from UŽ (N=36)	
		No. of answers	%	No. of answers	%
1.	Freedom	55	94.8	35	97.2
2.	Kindness	55	94.8	32	88.9
3.	Tolerance	53	91.4	34	94.4
4.	Dignity of a human being	57	98.3	20	55.6
5.	Identity of a human being	49	84.5	25	69.4
6.	Well-being	47	81.0	31	86.1
7.	Truth	43	74.1	28	77.8
8.	Equality before the law	40	69.0	30	83.3
9.	Morality	35	60.3	29	80.6
10.	Trust	39	67.2	27	75.0

Source: Prepared by the author. Abbreviations: UO, University of Opole; UŽ, University of Žilina

Values ranked as important are as follows: truth, equality before the law, trust and morality. None of the values included in the question was ranked as less important. The most important values selected by the female students from UŽ were as follows: freedom, tolerance, kindness, well-being, equality before the law and morality; values ranked as important were as follows: truth and trust. Identity and dignity of a human being were ranked as less important.

To verify how female students from the surveyed academic groups assess their own knowledge and skills in the context of future intercultural education in schools, they were asked to evaluate themselves. The following data were obtained:

- Their knowledge and skills were assessed as sufficient for the position of a teacher and for the future implementation of intercultural education at schools by 15.5% of UO female students and 19.4% UŽ female students.
- Insufficient knowledge of cultures of different nations, including neighbouring countries, from the perspective of their preparation for the position of a teacher, was declared by 46.6% of UO female students and 58.3% of UŽ female students.

A vast majority of the respondents, over 80% from both groups participating in the survey, stated that their knowledge and their skills required for intercultural education were insufficient. Studies devoted to a problem similar to that addressed herein have been conducted by, among others, Szczurek-Boruta (2015, pp. 66–73), who obtained results approximate to those presented herein (Dakowicz, 2013, pp. 103–115).

To elaborate on the problem of preparation of female students majoring in pedagogy for education in culturally diversified environment, an attempt was also made

to learn those areas of knowledge and skills, which should be incorporated in the university curriculum in such a scope, as to make students prepared for their future task – intercultural education. For this purpose, the respondents were asked the following question: which topics and subjects do you believe must and should be incorporated into the curriculum of pedagogy studies? The collected data are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4. Propositions regarding complementing curriculums of pedagogy studies with content related to interculturalism – according to the female students

No.	Problem-related propositions	Female students from UO (N=58); data in%	Female students from UŽ (N=36); data in%
1.	Intercultural education – as a major	53.4	38.9
2.	Cultural studies, including selected problems of the contemporary culture	31.3	25.0
3.	Sociology – in terms of social phenomena occurring in the contemporary world	15.5	19.4
4.	Political science – regarding areas of immigration policy and immigration	12.0	8.3
5.	Social communication – expanding the scope of classes in social communication psychology and interpersonal relations	48.2	38.9
6.	Intercultural psychology – as an introduction to identification of and understanding behaviours of people from different cultures	55.2	41.7

Source: Prepared by the author, more than one proposition could be selected by the female students. Abbreviations: UO, University of Opole; UŽ, University of Žilina

The greatest number of suggestions on expanding the curriculum of university studies pertained to two subjects: intercultural psychology (UO – 55.2%, UŽ – 41.7%) and intercultural education (UO – 53.4%, UŽ – 38.9%); social communication was the third subject pointed out by the students with a slightly lower figures (UO – 48.2%, UŽ – 38.9%).

Concluding remarks

The data collected through the survey points to the need of devoting attention to incorporate new areas of education into university curriculums or to expand the scope of the current curriculums of pedagogy studies. As far as intercultural education is concerned, the problem could be solved by including a separate subject or a series of extracurricular classes with an appropriate, set number of hours divided into lectures, methodological classes and study visits to institutions specialising in intercultural

education and holding achievements in this field. The problem of social communication could be addressed through an additional course aiming at expanding students' knowledge and improving their social skills. In descriptions of intercultural education, the emphasis is put on one's own activity deemed a fundamental factor for interaction-based communication. While confirming the importance of this factor in one's development, Brzezińska considered it fundamental with genetic features and related "adolescence processes, on the one hand, as well as socialisation and educational processes, on the other hand, being determinants of the said development" (Brzezińska, 2005, pp. 1-2). In the area of sciences, "which combine the psyche and the culture", there are such notions as intercultural psychology and cultural psychology. When students are not familiar with their definitions, both notions may contribute to incomprehension. Therefore, intercultural psychology, as a subject of additional classes, could also be included in university-wide courses, with particular emphasis on the "inter-type" of intercultural psychology encompassing psychological processes occurring in the course of interaction between individuals from different cultures as well as problems related to psychological acculturation (Boski, 2010, pp. 29-31). In the course of teachers' training, one must not omit the important problems set by the changing society; currently, these are represented by interculturalism. Intercultural education should be incorporated into curriculums of pedagogy studies as an obligatory element and should be used to broaden the competence of future teachers trained for their work in a contemporary school.

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